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Direct top-quark decay width measurement in the $t\bar{t}$ lepton+jets channel at $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV with the ATLAS experiment

The ATLAS Collaboration

This paper presents a direct measurement of the decay width of the top quark using $t\bar{t}$ events in the lepton+jets final state. The data sample was collected by the ATLAS detector at the LHC in proton–proton collisions at a centre-of-mass energy of 8 TeV and corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 20.2 fb^{-1} . The decay width of the top quark is measured using a template fit to distributions of kinematic observables associated with the hadronically and semileptonically decaying top quarks. The result, $\Gamma_t = 1.76 \pm 0.33 \text{ (stat.) } {}^{+0.79}_{-0.68} \text{ (syst.) GeV}$ for a top-quark mass of 172.5 GeV, is consistent with the prediction of the Standard Model.

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1 Introduction

The top quark is the heaviest particle in the Standard Model (SM) of elementary particle physics, discovered more than 20 years ago in 1995 [1, 2]. Due to its large mass of around 173 GeV [3–5], the lifetime of the top quark is extremely short. Hence, its decay width is the largest of all SM fermions. A next-to-leading-order (NLO) calculation evaluates a decay width of $\Gamma_t = 1.33$ GeV for a top-quark mass (m_t) of 172.5 GeV [6, 7]. Variations of the parameters entering the NLO calculation, the W -boson mass, the strong coupling constant α_S , the Fermi coupling constant G_F and the Cabibbo–Kobayashi–Maskawa (CKM) matrix element V_{tb} , within experimental uncertainties [8] yield an uncertainty of 6%. The recent next-to-next-to-leading-order (NNLO) calculation predicts $\Gamma_t = 1.322$ GeV for $m_t = 172.5$ GeV and $\alpha_S = 0.1181$ [9].

Any deviations from the SM prediction may hint at non-SM decay channels of the top quark or non-SM top-quark couplings, as predicted by many beyond-the-Standard-Model (BSM) theories. The top-quark decay width can be modified by direct top-quark decays into e.g. a charged Higgs boson [10, 11] or via flavour-changing neutral currents [12, 13] and also by non-SM radiative corrections [14]. Furthermore, some vector-like quark models [15] modify the $|V_{tb}|$ CKM matrix element and thus Γ_t . Precise measurements of Γ_t can consequently restrict the parameter space of many BSM models.

Extractions of Γ_t from the $t \rightarrow Wb$ branching ratio \mathcal{B} and the single-top t -channel cross-section, such as those of Refs. [16, 17], have reached a precision of 0.14 GeV, but depend on the assumption that $\sum_q \mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow Wq) = 1$ with $q = d, s, b$, and use theoretical SM predictions for $\Gamma(t \rightarrow Wb)$ and the single-top t -channel cross-section. Some BSM models, vector-like quark models for example [15], predict a sizeable deviation from the assumptions used in indirect measurements. This provides a motivation to perform a direct measurement of Γ_t although it is not yet sensitive to alternative BSM models with the current precision. A direct measurement of Γ_t , based on the analysis of the top-quark invariant mass distribution was performed at the Tevatron by the CDF Collaboration [18]. A bound on the decay width of $1.10 < \Gamma_t < 4.05$ GeV for $m_t = 172.5$ GeV was set at 68% confidence level. Direct measurements are limited by the experimental resolution of the top-quark mass spectrum, and so far are significantly less precise than indirect measurements, but avoid model-dependent assumptions.

This analysis is based on ATLAS data recorded at a centre-of-mass energy of $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV in 2012 in LHC proton–proton collisions. The top-quark decay width is extracted using $t\bar{t}$ events in the lepton+jets channel with $t \rightarrow Wb$, where one W boson from the two top quarks decays hadronically into a pair of quarks and the other one decays leptonically into a charged lepton and a neutrino (the corresponding top quarks are referred to as hadronically and semileptonically decaying, respectively). Thus, the final state consists of four jets, two of which are b -jets, one charged electron or muon and missing transverse momentum (E_T^{miss}) due to the undetected neutrino. Additional jets can originate from initial- or final-state radiation (ISR or FSR).

The measurement is performed using two observables sensitive to Γ_t : $m_{\ell b}$, which is the reconstructed invariant mass of the system formed by the b -jet and the charged lepton ℓ from the semileptonic top-quark decay, and $\Delta R_{\min}(j_b, j_l)$, defined as the angular distance¹ between the b -jet j_b associated with the

¹ ATLAS uses a right-handed coordinate system with its origin at the nominal interaction point (IP) in the centre of the detector and the z -axis along the beam pipe. The x -axis points from the IP to the centre of the LHC ring, and the y -axis points upwards. Cylindrical coordinates (r, ϕ) are used in the transverse plane, ϕ being the azimuthal angle around the z -axis. The pseudorapidity is defined in terms of the polar angle θ as $\eta = -\ln \tan(\theta/2)$. Angular distance is measured in units of $\Delta R \equiv \sqrt{(\Delta\eta)^2 + (\Delta\phi)^2}$.

hadronic top-quark decay and the closest light jet j_l from the hadronically decaying W boson. This approach exploits the kinematic information from both the hadronically and semileptonically decaying top quarks. A template method is used to measure the top-quark decay width. Templates for the two observables are built for all contributing SM processes. Distributions for multijet production are formed using a data-driven method. Templates for the other SM processes, including top-quark pair production and electroweak single-top production, are generated using Monte Carlo (MC) simulations. Templates for different top-quark decay width values are constructed by reweighting MC events. These templates are used in a binned likelihood fit to data to extract Γ_t .

The ATLAS detector is described in the next section. Section 3 introduces MC simulated samples and the dataset, followed by a description of the event selection and reconstruction in Section 4. The template fit is described in Section 5, the systematic uncertainties are estimated in Section 6. Section 7 presents the results of the measurement and Section 8 gives the conclusions.

2 ATLAS detector

The ATLAS experiment [19] at the LHC is a multi-purpose particle detector with a forward-backward symmetric cylindrical geometry and a near 4π coverage in solid angle. It consists of an inner tracking detector surrounded by a thin superconducting solenoid providing a 2 T axial magnetic field, electromagnetic and hadron calorimeters, and a muon spectrometer. The inner tracking detector covers the pseudorapidity range $|\eta| < 2.5$. It consists of silicon pixel, silicon microstrip, and transition radiation tracking detectors. Lead/liquid-argon (LAr) sampling calorimeters provide electromagnetic (EM) energy measurements with high granularity. A hadron (steel/scintillator-tile) calorimeter covers the central pseudorapidity range ($|\eta| < 1.7$). The endcap and forward regions are instrumented with LAr calorimeters for both the EM and hadronic energy measurements up to $|\eta| = 4.9$. The muon spectrometer surrounds the calorimeters and features three large air-core toroid superconducting magnets with eight coils each. The field integral of the toroids ranges between 2.0 and 6.0 Tm across most of the detector. It includes a system of precision tracking chambers and fast detectors for triggering. A three-level trigger system is used to select events. The first-level trigger is implemented in hardware and uses a subset of the detector information to reduce the accepted rate to at most 75 kHz. This is followed by two software-based trigger levels that together reduce the accepted event rate to 400 Hz on average.

3 Data and simulated event samples

The decay width of the top quark is measured using data which correspond to an integrated luminosity of 20.2 fb^{-1} [20]. Single-lepton triggers for electrons and muons under stable beam conditions were used. For each lepton type, two single-lepton triggers with the transverse momentum, p_T , thresholds of 24 (24) and 60 (36) GeV for electrons (muons) were used. The two triggers with the lower p_T thresholds imposed additional isolation requirements on the lepton to keep the trigger rate low. No isolation requirement was used by the higher p_T threshold triggers.

The nominal signal $t\bar{t}$ MC sample was generated assuming a top-quark mass of $m_t = 172.5 \text{ GeV}$ using the POWHEG-Box (v1) event generator [21–23], referred to in the following as POWHEG, providing NLO QCD matrix-element (ME) calculations [24]. The h_{damp} parameter that regulates the high- p_T radiation in

PowHEG was set to m_t . The CT10 parton distribution function (PDF) set [25] was used. The event generator was interfaced with PYTHIA 6.425 [26] for parton showering (PS), hadronisation and underlying event modelling, using the Perugia 2011C set of tuned parameters [27] and the CTEQ6L1 PDF set [28]. To estimate the impact of the parton shower and hadronisation model choice, a PowHEG+PYTHIA6 sample is compared to a sample generated with PowHEG interfaced with HERWIG 6.520 [29] using JIMMY v4.31 [30] to simulate the underlying event. The latter sample is referred to as PowHEG+HERWIG in the following. The h_{damp} parameter was set to infinity in both samples used to assess the parton shower systematic effect. The uncertainty due to the MC event generator choice is estimated using the alternative MC event generator MC@NLO [31, 32] for the hard process, interfaced to HERWIG for showering, hadronisation and the simulation of the underlying event which is compared to the PowHEG+HERWIG sample. To assess the impact of the initial- and final-state radiation, samples generated with PowHEG were interfaced to PYTHIA with different settings for the event generator parameters regulating ISR and FSR. In these samples, the h_{damp} parameter and the factorisation and renormalisation scales in PowHEG, as well as the transverse momentum scale for space-like parton shower evolution in PYTHIA were varied to cover the range in additional jet multiplicity corresponding to the uncertainty of $t\bar{t}$ production measurements in association with jets [33, 34]. The $t\bar{t}$ samples are normalised using the theoretical cross-section of $\sigma_{t\bar{t}} = 253^{+15}_{-16}$ pb, based on a calculation performed with the Top++2.0 [35–40] program that includes NNLO corrections and resums next-to-next-to-leading-logarithmic-order (NNLL) soft gluon terms. PDF and scale variations, the choice of α_S , and the input top-quark mass are regarded as sources of systematic uncertainty.

Background events containing a W or a Z boson produced in association with jets were generated using the ALPGEN 2.14 [41] LO event generator with up to five additional partons and the CTEQ6L1 PDF set [28]. Parton shower and hadronisation were modelled with PYTHIA 6.425. Separate samples were generated for $W/Z + b\bar{b}$, $W/Z + c\bar{c}$, $W + c$, and W/Z +light jets. A parton–jet matching scheme (“MLM matching”) [42] is used to prevent double-counting of jets generated by both the matrix-element calculation and the parton-shower evolution. The W +jets events are normalised using a data-driven method exploiting the asymmetry of W^\pm production in pp collision [43]. The corrections for event generator mismodelling in the fractions of different flavour components ($W + b\bar{b}$, $W + c\bar{c}$, $W + c$ and W +light jets) are estimated in a sample with the same lepton and E_T^{miss} selections as the signal selection, but with only two jets and no b -tagging requirement. The b -jet multiplicity, in conjunction with knowledge of the b -tagging and mistag efficiency, is used to extract the heavy-flavour fractions. The correction factors extracted from the MC simulation and used in the analysis are $K_{b\bar{b}} = K_{c\bar{c}} = 1.50 \pm 0.11$ (stat.+syst.), $K_c = 1.07 \pm 0.27$ (stat.+syst.) and $K_{\text{light}} = 0.80 \pm 0.04$ (stat.+syst.) [43]. The Z +jets events are normalised using the inclusive NNLO theoretical cross-section [44].

Diboson background samples were generated with the SHERPA 1.4.1 event generator [45] with up to three additional partons in the LO matrix elements using the CT10 PDF set. The samples are normalised with the NLO theoretical cross-sections [46].

At leading order, three single-top-quark production mechanisms, s -channel, t -channel and associated Wt production, contribute to the single-top-quark background. These processes were simulated with PowHEG [47, 48] using the CT10 PDF set. All samples were interfaced to PYTHIA 6.425 with the CTEQ6L1 PDF set and the Perugia 2011C tune. Overlaps between the $t\bar{t}$ and Wt final states were removed [49]. All individual single-top-quark samples are normalised using their corresponding approximate NNLO theoretical cross-sections [50, 51] based on an MSTW 2008 NNLO PDF set calculation [52].

Multijet events can pass the selection because of the misidentification of a jet or a photon as an electron or muon (fake lepton) or because of the presence of a non-prompt lepton (electron or muon), which can

originate from semileptonic decays of heavy-flavour hadrons. This background, referred to as multijet background in the following, is estimated directly from data using a data-driven matrix method [53].

The detector response [54] was simulated using the GEANT 4 simulation toolkit [55]. To estimate some systematic effects, samples passed through a fast simulation [56] are used. This simulation utilises a parameterisation of the response of the EM and hadronic calorimeters while a full simulation is used for the tracking systems. The effects of in-time and out-of-time pile-up (multiple pp interactions from the same or neighbouring bunch-crossings) are included in the simulation. Events from minimum-bias interactions were simulated with the PYTHIA 8.1 event generator with the MSTW 2008 LO PDF set and the A2 tune [57] and overlaid on signal and background processes to simulate the effect of pile-up. The simulated events are reweighted in order to match the distribution of the average number of collisions per bunch crossing in the data. MC events are processed through the same reconstruction algorithms as the data.

4 Event reconstruction and selection

4.1 Event reconstruction

Electrons, muons, jets, b -jets and missing transverse momentum are used to select $t\bar{t}$ events in this analysis.

Electron candidates are reconstructed using energy deposits in the electromagnetic calorimeter matched to reconstructed inner-detector tracks [58]. These electron candidates are required to have $p_T > 25$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.47$, with the transition region between the barrel and endcap detector $1.37 < |\eta| < 1.52$ excluded. Isolation requirements are used to reduce the background from fake and non-prompt electrons. A p_T - and η -dependent isolation requirement is placed on the sum of transverse energy deposited within a cone of size $\Delta R = 0.2$ around the calorimeter cells associated to the electron. This energy sum excludes cells in the cluster associated with the electron and is corrected for leakage from that cluster and for energy deposits from pile-up. Another p_T - and η -dependent isolation requirement is made on the scalar sum of track transverse momenta around the electron within a cone of size $\Delta R = 0.3$. Furthermore, the longitudinal impact parameter $|z_0|$ of the electron track with respect to the selected event primary vertex² (PV) is required to be smaller than 2 mm.

Muon candidate reconstruction is based on tracks in the muon spectrometer which are matched to inner-detector tracks [59]. The combined muon track must satisfy $p_T > 25$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.5$ and its longitudinal impact parameter z_0 with respect to the PV is required to be smaller than 2 mm. Muon candidates have to be separated from any jet by $\Delta R > 0.4$ and are required to satisfy a p_T -dependent track-based isolation requirement. Specifically, the scalar sum of the transverse momenta of tracks within a cone of size $\Delta R = 10 \text{ GeV}/p_T$ around the muon candidate (excluding the muon track itself) has to be less than 5% of the muon transverse momentum.

Jets are reconstructed using the anti- k_t algorithm [60], implemented in the FASTJET package [61], with a radius parameter of $R = 0.4$. The jet reconstruction starts from calibrated topological clusters [62] which are built from energy deposits in the calorimeters. To correct for effects due to the non-compensating

² The primary vertex is required to have at least four associated tracks with $p_T > 400$ MeV. If more than one vertex fulfils this criterion, the one with the largest sum of squared transverse momenta from its associated tracks is defined to be the primary vertex.

calorimeter response, dead material and out-of-cluster leakage, a local cluster calibration scheme [63, 64] is applied prior to jet finding. Simulations of charged and neutral particles are exploited to estimate these corrections. The jets are calibrated by applying energy- and $|\eta|$ -dependent calibration factors, derived from simulations, to the mean energy of the jets built from the stable particles [65]. In addition, a residual calibration [66] of the jet energy scale (JES) was performed using data taken in 2012. Dijet events are used to calibrate jets in the forward region against jets in the central region. Photon+jet as well as Z +jet events are used to calibrate central jets, and multijet events are used to calibrate high- p_T jets. These measurements are then combined. Jets are accepted if they fulfil $p_T > 25$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.5$ after energy calibration. To reduce the contribution from jets associated with pile-up, jets having $p_T < 50$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.4$ must satisfy a requirement [67] for the jet vertex fraction,³ $JVF > 0.5$. To prevent double-counting of electrons as jets, the closest jet lying $\Delta R < 0.2$ of a selected electron is discarded. If the nearest jet surviving the selection described above is within $\Delta R = 0.4$ of the electron, the electron is discarded.

The purity of the selected sample is improved by tagging jets containing b -hadrons on the basis of their large mass and decay time. The MV1 algorithm [69] based on multivariate techniques is utilised to identify jets originating from the hadronisation of a b -quark. The chosen working point corresponds to an efficiency of 70% to correctly identify a b -quark jet in simulated $t\bar{t}$ events, with a light-jet rejection factor of around 130 and a c -jet rejection factor of 5. The tagging efficiencies in simulation are corrected to match the results of the calibrations based on data [70, 71].

The E_T^{miss} serves as a measure of the transverse momentum of the neutrino which originates from the leptonically decaying W boson. It is calculated using all reconstructed and calibrated particles (electrons, muons, photons) and jets. Contributions from the inner-detector tracks from the hard-scatter primary vertex, not associated with any electron, muon or jet, are also taken into account [72].

4.2 Event selection

According to the signature of the $t\bar{t}$ signal in the lepton+jets decay channel, events are required to have exactly one reconstructed electron or muon and at least four jets, at least one of which is required to be b -tagged. This selection includes W -boson decays into a τ lepton if the τ decays leptonically. Events are required to pass a single-electron or single-muon trigger. If at least one of the jets having $p_T > 20$ GeV is identified as out-of-time activity from a previous pp collision, as calorimeter noise or non-collision background, the event is not considered [73].

Events with exactly one b -tagged jet need to have $E_T^{\text{miss}} > 20$ GeV and $E_T^{\text{miss}} + m_T^W > 60$ GeV, where m_T^W is the transverse mass of the leptonically decaying W boson defined as $m_T^W = \sqrt{2p_T^\ell E_T^{\text{miss}}(1 - \cos \Delta\phi(\ell, E_T^{\text{miss}}))}$. These requirements suppress the background due to misidentified leptons. As this background becomes very small in high b -tag multiplicity regions, these requirements are not applied to events with at least two b -tagged jets. Selected events are reconstructed under the $t\bar{t}$ decay hypothesis using a likelihood-based method described in Section 4.3. The logarithm of the likelihood has to satisfy $\ln(L) > -50$ to suppress the combinatorial background due to wrongly reconstructed events and to decrease other backgrounds. This improves the sensitivity of the measurement by increasing the fraction of well-reconstructed $t\bar{t}$ events

³ The jet vertex fraction (JVF [68]) is the ratio of the sum of the p_T of tracks associated with the jet and the primary vertex to the sum of p_T of all tracks associated with the jet, while the p_T of the involved tracks needs to exceed 1 GeV. Hence, this selection ensures that at least 50% of the sum of the p_T of tracks associated with the jet belongs to tracks compatible with originating from the primary vertex.

Table 1: Event yields after the event selection in the (a) electron+jets and (b) muon+jets channel for events with exactly one or at least two b -tags divided into events where all four jets associated with the $t\bar{t}$ decay have $|\eta| \leq 1$ and events where at least one jet has $|\eta| > 1$. The uncertainties in the signal and background yields arising from normalisation uncertainties of each sample are shown. These correspond to the theory uncertainties as described in Section 5 for the background sources except for the W +jets and the multijet background, whose uncertainties originate from the data-driven methods.

(a) Electron+jets channel.

e +jets	$ \eta \leq 1$ region		$ \eta > 1$ region	
Sample	1 b -tag	≥ 2 b -tags	1 b -tag	≥ 2 b -tags
$t\bar{t}$	5850 ± 380	6480 ± 420	29200 ± 1900	27600 ± 1800
Single top	285 ± 48	141 ± 24	1830 ± 310	860 ± 150
$W + bb/cc$	362 ± 40	81 ± 9	2640 ± 290	506 ± 56
$W + c$	174 ± 47	8 ± 2	1300 ± 350	56 ± 15
$W + \text{light}$	87 ± 3	3.7 ± 0.2	578 ± 23	26 ± 1
$Z + \text{jets}$	120 ± 58	38 ± 18	1190 ± 570	310 ± 150
Diboson	31 ± 15	4 ± 2	183 ± 88	29 ± 14
Multijet	228 ± 68	38 ± 11	2490 ± 750	540 ± 160
Total expected	7140 ± 400	6790 ± 420	39400 ± 2200	29900 ± 1800
Data	6800	7056	37823	30644

(b) Muon+jets channel.

μ +jets	$ \eta \leq 1$ region		$ \eta > 1$ region	
Sample	1 b -tag	≥ 2 b -tags	1 b -tag	≥ 2 b -tags
$t\bar{t}$	7000 ± 450	7640 ± 490	35900 ± 2300	33500 ± 2200
Single top	369 ± 63	160 ± 27	2110 ± 360	980 ± 170
$W + bb/cc$	473 ± 52	117 ± 13	3450 ± 380	756 ± 83
$W + c$	223 ± 60	5 ± 1	1540 ± 420	63 ± 17
$W + \text{light}$	96 ± 4	1.8 ± 0.1	797 ± 32	40 ± 2
$Z + \text{jets}$	74 ± 36	16 ± 8	610 ± 290	159 ± 76
Diboson	37 ± 18	6 ± 3	198 ± 95	32 ± 15
Multijet	195 ± 59	34 ± 10	1870 ± 560	400 ± 120
Total expected	8470 ± 470	7980 ± 490	46400 ± 2500	36000 ± 2200
Data	8274	8193	46275	36471

in the selected sample. Events satisfying all selection criteria are separated into eight mutually exclusive analysis regions. The events are categorised according to the flavour of the selected lepton and whether they have exactly one or at least two b -tagged jets. They are further split into two $|\eta|$ regions, a central region with all four jets associated with the $t\bar{t}$ decay having $|\eta| \leq 1$ and a second one with at least one jet with $|\eta| > 1$. This approach takes advantage of the different sensitivity of these regions to detector resolution effects and pile-up contributions and different amounts of background. The corresponding event yields are listed in Table 1. Figures 1 and 2 show the distributions of the lepton and leading b -tagged jet p_T , lepton and leading b -tagged jet η , E_T^{miss} and m_T^W for events with at least two b -tagged jets in the electron and muon channels, respectively. Good agreement within the assigned statistical and systematic uncertainties is observed between data and the predictions from simulation.

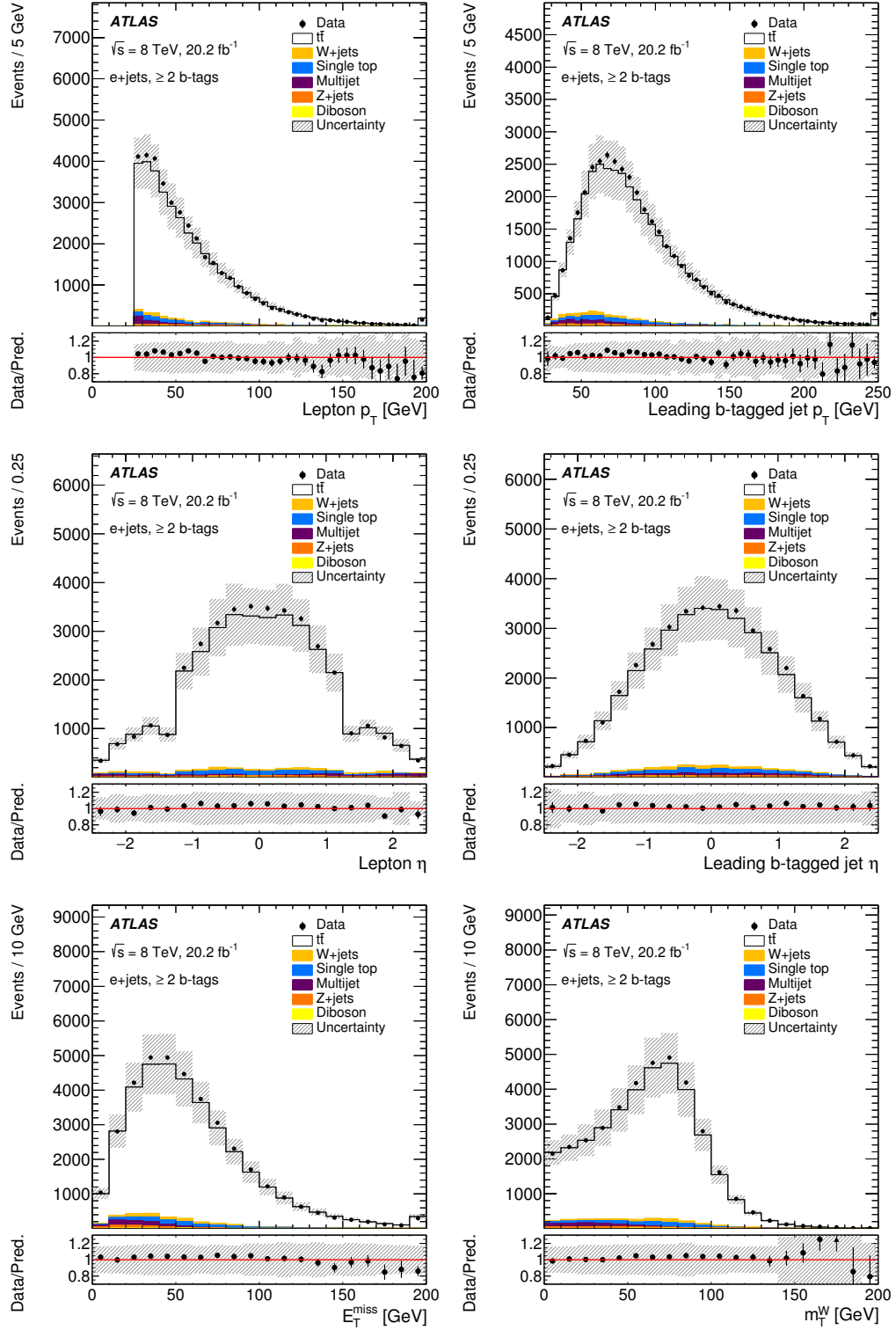


Figure 1: Distributions of the lepton and leading b -tagged jet p_T , lepton and leading b -tagged jet η , E_T^{miss} and m_T^W in the electron+jets channel for events with at least two b -tagged jets after event selection. The hatched bands show the normalisation uncertainty in the signal and background contributions and the signal model systematic uncertainties. The first and last bins contain underflow and overflow events, respectively.

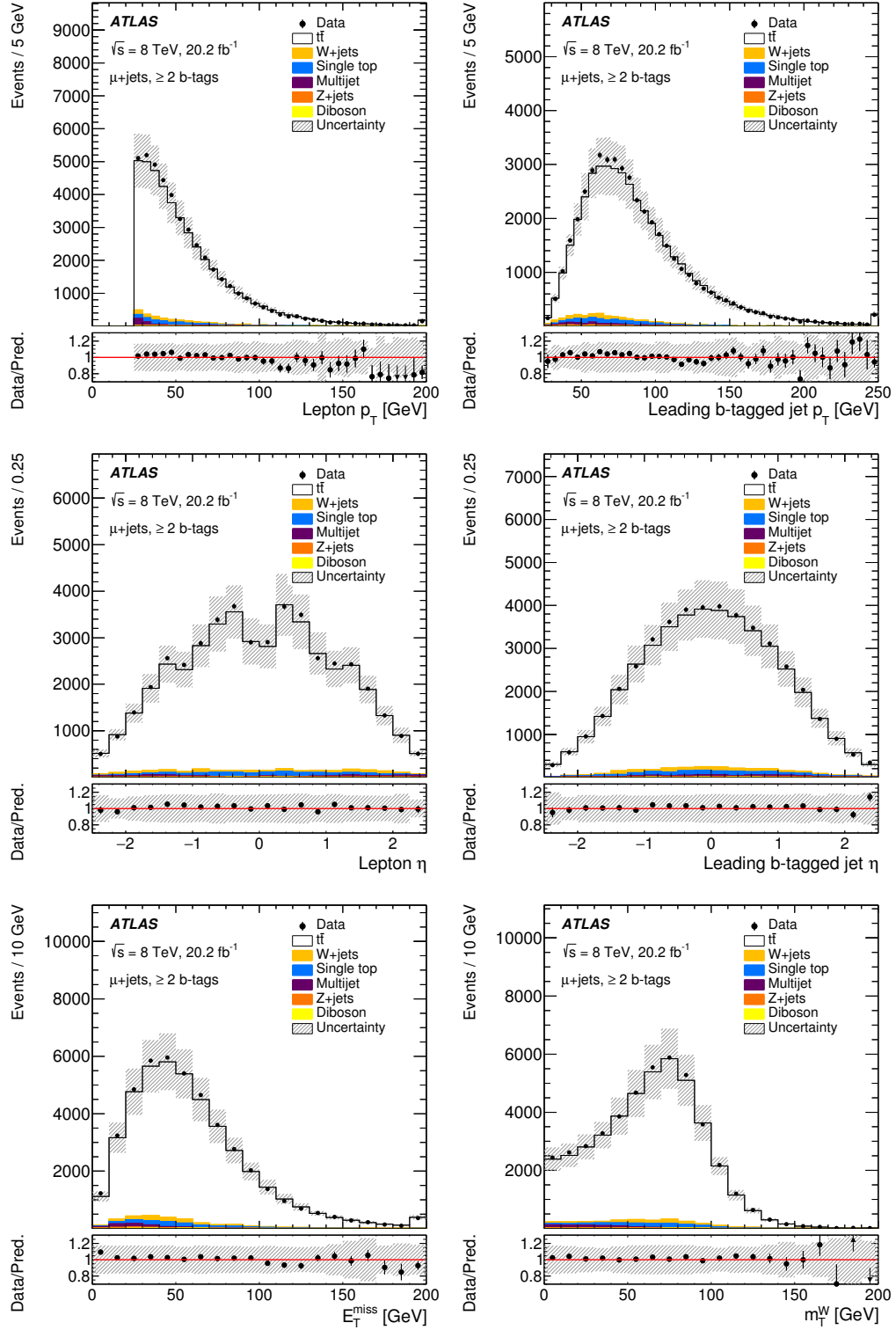


Figure 2: Distributions of the lepton and leading b -tagged jet p_T , lepton and leading b -tagged jet η , E_T^{miss} and m_T^W in the muon+jets channel for events with at least two b -tagged jets after event selection. The hatched bands show the normalisation uncertainty in the signal and background contributions and the signal model systematic uncertainties. The first and last bins contain underflow and overflow events, respectively.

4.3 Reconstruction of the $t\bar{t}$ decay

The correct assignment of reconstructed jets to partons originating from a $t\bar{t}$ decay is important for this measurement. This is achieved using a likelihood-based method (Kinematic Likelihood Fitter, KLFFitter [74]) which makes use of the Bayesian Analysis Toolkit [75]. KLFFitter maps the four partons of the $t\bar{t}$ decay to four reconstructed jets using mass constraints on the top-quark mass m_t and the W -boson mass m_W . In this analysis the four jets with the highest p_T are used as input to KLFFitter. A likelihood L is maximised for all resulting 24 permutations. For each permutation the likelihood is defined as

$$L = \text{BW}(m_{q1q2q3}|m_t, \Gamma_t) \cdot \text{BW}(m_{q1q2}|m_W, \Gamma_W) \cdot \text{BW}(m_{q4\ell\nu}|m_t, \Gamma_t) \cdot \text{BW}(m_{\ell\nu}|m_W, \Gamma_W) \cdot \prod_{i=1}^4 W(E_i^{\text{meas}}|E_i) \cdot W(E_\ell^{\text{meas}}|E_\ell) \cdot W(E_x^{\text{miss}}|p_x^\nu) \cdot W(E_y^{\text{miss}}|p_y^\nu). \quad (1)$$

The $W(E_P^{\text{meas}}|E_P)$ are transfer functions, where E_P^{meas} is the measured energy of the jet or lepton P , E_P is the energy of the corresponding parton or lepton, and p_x^ν and p_y^ν are the momentum components of the neutrino ν in the transverse plane. These momentum components as well as the energies E_P are free parameters of the likelihood maximisation. The component p_z^ν is initially calculated using a constraint on the W -boson mass $m_W^2 = (p_\nu + p_\ell)^2$ with the four-momenta p_ν and p_ℓ [74]. Transfer functions for electrons, muons, b -jets, light jets (including c -jets) and E_T^{miss} are used. They are derived from simulated $t\bar{t}$ events using MC@NLO+HERWIG [29, 31, 32]. The decay products of the $t\bar{t}$ pair are uniquely matched to reconstructed particles to obtain a continuous function which describes the relative energy difference between a parton and a reconstructed jet or particle as a function of the parton energy. Parameterisations are derived for different $|\eta|$ regions. The $\text{BW}(m_{ij(k)}|m_{t/W}, \Gamma_{t/W})$ terms represent Breit–Wigner functions which stand for the probability distribution of the reconstructed W -boson or top-quark mass given the assumed mass $m_{t/W}$ and a decay width $\Gamma_{t/W}$. Indices $q1$ – $q4$ refer to the four quarks mapped to the reconstructed jets.

To exploit the presence of two b -quarks in a $t\bar{t}$ decay, kinematic information is complemented by b -tagging. To take it into account, the likelihood definition of Eq. (1) is extended and turned into an event probability which, for a given permutation i , is expressed as

$$P_i = \frac{L_i \prod_j p_{i,j}}{\sum_k L_k \prod_j p_{k,j}}.$$

The $p_{i,j}$ contain the b -tagging efficiency or the mistag rate corresponding to the b -tagging working point, depending on the jet j flavour assigned by KLFFitter and whether it is b -tagged or not. This factor is calculated for all jets j and multiplied by the likelihood L_i . KLFFitter calculates the latter quantity for each permutation in the event according to Eq. (1). The permutation with the largest event probability determines the jet-to-parton assignment that is used to build the observables $m_{\ell b}$ and $\Delta R_{\min}(j_b, j_l)$. In this analysis the mass parameters are set to $m_W = 80.4$ GeV and $m_t = 172.5$ GeV and the decay width parameters are fixed to $\Gamma_W = 2.1$ GeV and $\Gamma_t = 1.33$ GeV. The analysis uses KLFFitter only to choose the best assignment of jets to partons and does not exploit the fitted four-momenta for the reconstructed particles. A variation of the Γ_t parameter used in KLFFitter was proven to have no impact on the reconstructed distributions and thus the extracted measured value of Γ_t .

Figure 3 shows distributions of the logarithm of the likelihood for different analysis regions. The events with $\ln(L) < -50$ form a smaller second peak containing mainly events where the correct permutation is not found. Thus, a requirement of $\ln(L) > -50$ removes a significant fraction of the combinatorial background. The fraction of events where all four partons are matched correctly increases from 13% to 23% (17% to 31%) after applying this requirement to events with at least one (two) b -tagged jet(s). This selection also improves the purity of the sample by removing more background events than $t\bar{t}$ signal. The analysis does not rely on matching correctly all four jets. The observable $m_{\ell b}$, which provides most of the sensitivity to Γ_t , depends solely on the correct assignment of the b -jet from the semileptonically decaying top quark for which the reconstruction efficiency is 65% (75%) for events with at least one (two) b -tagged jet(s).

5 Template fit

The decay width of the top quark is measured using a simultaneous template fit to distributions of two observables associated with the hadronic and semileptonic decay branches of $t\bar{t}$ events in the eight mutually exclusive analysis regions. The observables are $m_{\ell b}$, which is the reconstructed invariant mass of the b -jet of the semileptonically decaying top quark and the corresponding lepton, and $\Delta R_{\min}(j_b, j_l)$, which is the angular distance between the b -jet j_b and the closest light jet j_l , both originating from the hadronically decaying top quark. The choice of $m_{\ell b}$ is due to its good sensitivity to Γ_t while being less sensitive to jet-related uncertainties compared to reconstructed masses of the hadronic decay branch. Despite the much lower sensitivity of $\Delta R_{\min}(j_b, j_l)$ to Γ_t , it is beneficial to use it in the fit because it adds information from the hadronic top-quark decay branch and reduces leading jet-related and signal model systematic uncertainties in the combination with $m_{\ell b}$. Several other observables defined using the invariant mass of, or angles between, the $t\bar{t}$ decay products were tested but were found to be less suitable because of larger jet-related or signal model uncertainties.

Signal templates are generated by reweighting events at parton-level to Breit–Wigner distributions with alternative top-quark decay-width hypotheses. A total of 54 templates for different values of Γ_t are created: 50 templates cover the range $0.1 < \Gamma_t < 5.0$ GeV in steps of $\Delta\Gamma = 0.1$ GeV. Four additional templates are created for $\Gamma_t = 0.01, 6, 7, 8$ GeV to take into account very small and very large width values. The top-quark decay width in the nominal MC signal sample is $\Gamma_t = 1.33$ GeV corresponding to the NLO calculation. The reweighting method was validated using a signal MC sample generated with $\Gamma_t = 3.0$ GeV by comparing top-quark mass distributions of this sample with top-quark mass distributions obtained from the reweighting procedure at parton level, and no significant differences were observed. The impact on the template distributions by varying the decay width in the range of 0.7 to 3.0 GeV is shown in Figure 4.

The binned likelihood fit to data uses these signal templates for the $t\bar{t}$ contribution. Templates for all other processes, including single-top-quark production, are fixed. The effect on the result of using a fixed decay width in the single-top-quark template was found to be negligible. The number of expected events per bin i is given by

$$n_i = n_{\text{signal},i} + \sum_{j=1}^B n_{\text{bkg},ji} ,$$

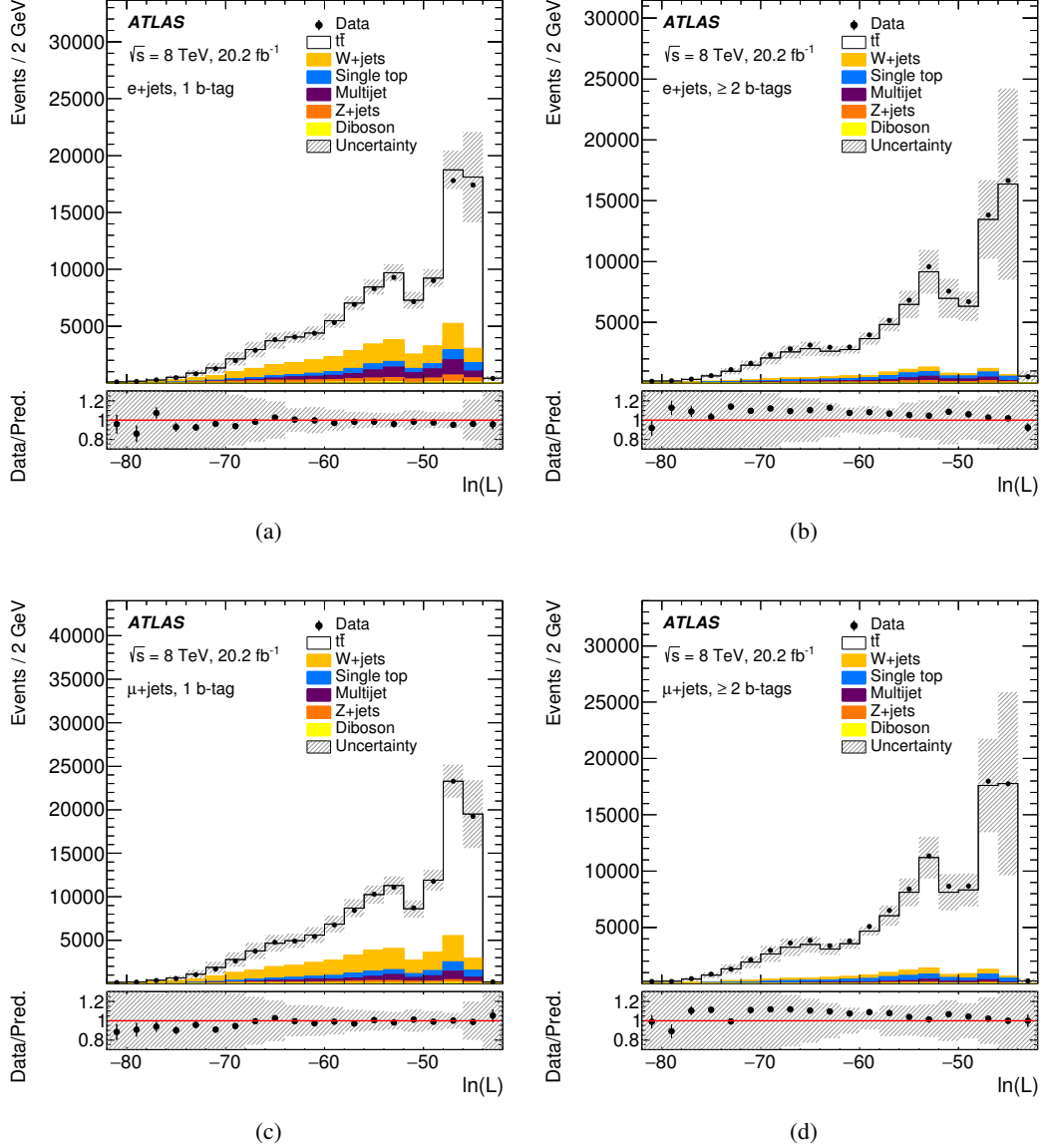


Figure 3: Distributions of the logarithm of the likelihood obtained from the event reconstruction algorithm for the selected (a,b) electron+jets and (c,d) muon+jets events with (a,c) exactly one and (b,d) at least two b -tagged jets. The events with $\ln(L) < -50$ form a secondary broader peak containing mainly events which are not properly reconstructed, i.e. events for which not all four jets are correctly matched to partons. Fully matched events are mainly present in the larger $\ln(L)$ regions. The hatched bands show the normalisation uncertainty in the signal and background contributions and the signal model systematic uncertainties. The first and last bins contain underflow and overflow events, respectively.

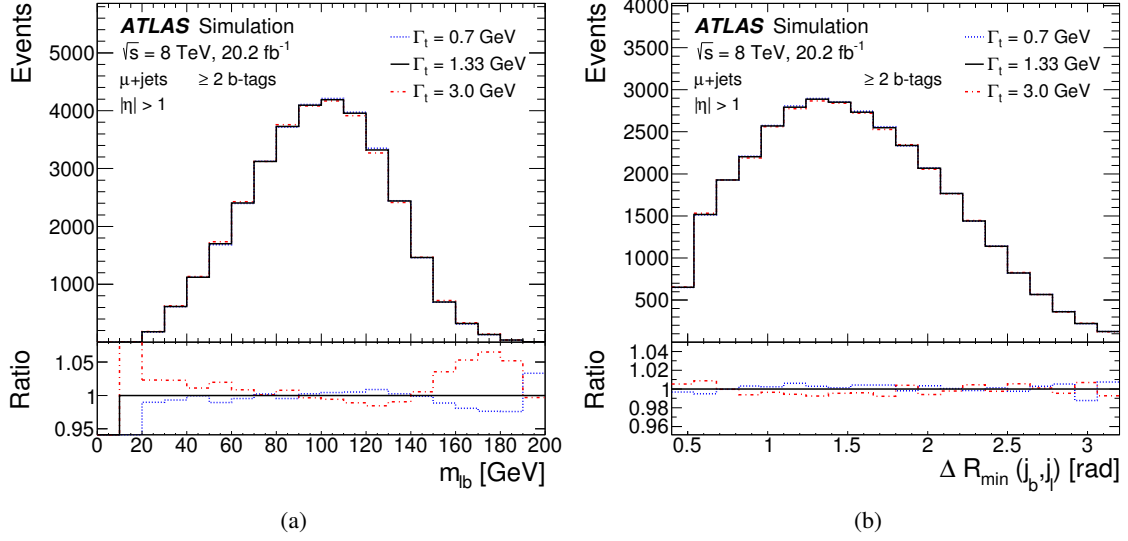


Figure 4: Templates for (a) the reconstructed invariant mass of the b -jet of the semileptonically decaying top quark and the corresponding lepton, m_{lb} , and (b) $\Delta R_{\min}(j_b, j_l)$, the angular distance between the b -jet j_b associated with the hadronic top quark and the closest light jet j_l from the hadronically decaying W boson, in the range $0.7 \leq \Gamma_t \leq 3.0$ GeV in the muon+jets channel for events with at least two b -tags in the $|\eta| > 1$ region. The lower panel shows the ratio of the templates with varied Γ_t to the nominal template generated for a decay width of $\Gamma_t = 1.33$ GeV.

where the index j runs over all backgrounds. The likelihood for an observable O is defined as follows:

$$\mathcal{L}(O|\Gamma_t) = \prod_{i=1}^{N_{\text{bins}}} \text{Poisson}(n_{\text{data},i}|n_i(\Gamma_t)) \cdot \prod_{j=1}^B \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}\sigma_{\text{bkg},j}} \exp\left(-\frac{(n_{\text{bkg},j} - \hat{n}_{\text{bkg},j})^2}{2\sigma_{\text{bkg},j}^2}\right), \quad (2)$$

where N_{bins} is the number of bins in a template and $n_{\text{data},i}$ is the number of data events in each bin i . The number of events from a background source j , $n_{\text{bkg},j}$, is obtained from $n_{\text{bkg},ji}$ by summing over all bins i . This number of background events varies in the fit but it is constrained by Gaussian terms where $\hat{n}_{\text{bkg},j}$ is the expected number of background events for source j and $\sigma_{\text{bkg},j}$ is its uncertainty. The total number of signal events is a free parameter of the fit. The fit parameters $n_{\text{bkg},j}$ are common to all b -tag bins, lepton channels and $|\eta|$ regions except for the multijet background. For the latter, separate parameters are defined for each analysis region.

The uncertainties used as constraints in Eq. (2) on the W +jets background components normalisation originating from data-driven calibration (see Section 3) amount to 7% for $W + b\bar{b}$ and $W + c\bar{c}$, 25% for $W + c$, and 5% for W +light jets events. The uncertainty in the multijet background is taken from the matrix method and amounts to 30%. For the Z +jets and diboson events, a 4% theory uncertainty in the inclusive cross-section is applied together with a 24% uncertainty per additional jet added in quadrature, which covers the extrapolation to higher jet multiplicities based on MC studies, resulting in an uncertainty of 48% for events with four jets. The uncertainty in single-top-quark production amounts to 17% and considers the variation of initial- and final-state radiation in the t -channel MC samples and accounts for extra jets in single-top-quark events.

The fit is performed for 55 templates (54 obtained from the reweighting algorithm and the nominal one). The combined likelihood, defined as the product of two Poisson terms as given in Eq. (2), one for each observable, multiplied by the Gaussian constraints, is maximised for every value of Γ_t . The measured top-quark decay width is extracted from the minimum of a quadratic fit to the negative logarithm of the likelihood values. The fit method was validated using pseudo-experiments, and the correlation between the two observables was examined. In each pseudo-experiment the content of the bins of the $m_{\ell b}$ and $\Delta R_{\min}(j_b, j_l)$ distributions are varied according to the Poisson and Gaussian distributions to take into account the expected number of events per bin and the background constraints, respectively. These pseudo-experiments are used for a linearity test and to produce pull distributions. The pull is defined as the difference between the fitted value Γ_t and the input value divided by the estimated uncertainty of the fit result. No deviations from the expectation were found for various decay width values within $1.1 < \Gamma_t < 4.0$ GeV. For smaller decay width values the pull width decreases since the Γ_t distribution approaches a limit of 0 GeV. However, this does not affect the result and the fit method is stable and unbiased. Additional pseudo-experiments revealed that the small correlation between $m_{\ell b}$ and $\Delta R_{\min}(j_b, j_l)$ of about (0.1–2.8)% does not affect the fit result. The observables are thus treated as independent.

6 Systematic uncertainties

Systematic uncertainties affect the normalisation of signal and background and the shape of the distributions sensitive to the top-quark decay width. Individual sources of systematic uncertainty are considered uncorrelated and are summed in quadrature to determine the total uncertainty. Correlations of systematic uncertainties from the same source are fully maintained for all analysis regions. Pseudo-experiments are used to estimate the impact of the different sources of uncertainty according to the following procedure. For each source of systematic uncertainty, templates corresponding to the respective up and down variations are created. These variations consider shape and acceptance changes of the systematic uncertainty source under study. Pseudo-data sets are generated by imposing Poisson fluctuations and Gaussian fluctuations on the background contributions (to account for the Gaussian constraints) to each bin, as described in Section 5. Then the nominal and varied templates are used to perform a fit to pseudo-data. For each systematic variation 2000 of these pseudo-experiments were performed, and the differences between the means of the fitted-value distribution using the nominal templates and the up and down variations are quoted as the systematic uncertainty from this source. The systematic uncertainties in the measurement of the top-quark decay width are summarised in Table 2.

6.1 Uncertainties in detector modelling

The systematic uncertainties arising from charged leptons are classified into several categories, related to the reconstruction and trigger efficiency, the identification and the lepton momentum scale and resolution. This leads to five (six) components of uncertainties associated with the electron (muon).

Jet-related uncertainties arise from the jet reconstruction efficiency, the jet vertex fraction requirement, the jet energy resolution (JER) and the jet energy scale. The JES and its uncertainties were derived by combining information from test-beam data, LHC collision data and simulation [65, 66]. The JES calibration is described in Section 3. The jet energy scale uncertainty is split into 26 p_T - and η -dependent sources, treated independently. It is the largest of the detector modelling uncertainties in this analysis.

The JER was evaluated separately for data and simulation using two in situ techniques [65], improved by additional in situ measurements using dijet, photon+jet or Z +jet processes. For low- p_T jets, a significant contribution to the JER uncertainty comes from pile-up, measured as in Ref. [66]. The JER uncertainty consists of 11 components and represents an important uncertainty in this measurement. The systematic uncertainties originating from these components are summed in quadrature. The symmetrised difference is the quoted systematic uncertainty in the JER.

The per-jet efficiency to pass the JVF selection is evaluated in $Z(\rightarrow \ell^+ \ell^-)+1$ -jet events in data and simulation [67]. Motivated by this study, the uncertainty is estimated by changing the JVF requirement value, increasing and decreasing it by 0.1, and repeating the analysis using this modified value.

Energy scale and resolution correction uncertainties of both the leptons and jets are propagated into the calculation of E_T^{miss} . A further E_T^{miss} uncertainty accounts for mis-modeling of pileup energy deposits.

The jet-flavour-dependent efficiencies of the b -tagging algorithm are calibrated using data. The b -tagging efficiency is corrected to match the efficiency measured in the $t\bar{t}$ data events using the probability density function calibration method [70, 71] based on a combinatorial likelihood applied to a data sample of dileptonic $t\bar{t}$ events. The mistag rate for c -jets is measured using D^* mesons, the one for light jets is measured using jets with impact parameters and secondary vertices consistent with a negative lifetime [69, 71]. Efficiencies for b - and c -jets are corrected in simulations by p_T -dependent scale factors. For light jets, these scale factors also depend on the pseudorapidity. Six independent sources of uncertainty affecting the b -tagging efficiency and four affecting the c -tagging efficiency are considered [70]. For the mistagging of light-quark jets, 12 uncertainties which depend on jet p_T and η [71] are considered.

6.2 Uncertainties in background modelling

The uncertainties in the background normalisation are included as Gaussian constraints in the fit (see Eq. (2)) and thus contribute to the overall statistical uncertainty.

To estimate the uncertainty in the shape modelling of the W +jets background, each of its flavour components ($W+b\bar{b}/c\bar{c}$, $W+c$ and W +light) is allowed to vary independently in the fit within its uncertainty, corresponding to the uncertainty in the calibration factors. The shape uncertainty of the W +jets contribution is retrieved by varying one component while fixing the other two to their respective normalisations, as given in Section 3.

Two simulated samples are compared to estimate the modelling uncertainty of single-top events. The baseline MC event generator for Wt production uses the diagram removal technique [76] to account for the overlap with $t\bar{t}$ events. This sample is compared to a sample generated with the inclusive diagram subtraction technique [76]. The difference is then symmetrised, i.e. the difference of the two-point comparison is taken as the uncertainty on both sides of the nominal result.

For the multijet background an uncertainty in the total yield of $\pm 30\%$ is assigned. Furthermore, two shape uncertainties are defined by varying the control samples used to obtain the efficiencies used in the matrix method to relate the two identification levels for objects considered as fake or non-prompt and prompt leptons, respectively.

The background yields estimated from MC simulation are affected by the luminosity uncertainty of 1.9% [20], which is propagated to the constraints on the background yields.

6.3 Uncertainties in signal modelling

Several uncertainties affect the shape of the $t\bar{t}$ signal contributions. The uncertainties due to initial- and final-state radiation are determined using two dedicated POWHEG+PYTHIA samples (see Section 3) generated with varied parameter values giving more or less radiation. Pseudo-data is created using each sample, and the largest variation of the top-quark decay width from the nominal is taken as an uncertainty and then symmetrised.

The POWHEG MC event generator interfaced to PYTHIA is compared to POWHEG interfaced with HERWIG to estimate the uncertainty due to the parton shower and the hadronisation model. To estimate the uncertainty in the choice of the $t\bar{t}$ event generator, the full difference between POWHEG and MC@NLO event generators, both interfaced with HERWIG, is evaluated. This is the largest signal modelling uncertainty in this measurement. The uncertainty of the colour reconnection modelling is estimated by comparing the nominal $t\bar{t}$ sample to a POWHEG sample interfaced with Pythia with a special parameter tune for colour reconnection. The uncertainty in the underlying-event modelling is determined by comparing the nominal $t\bar{t}$ sample with a POWHEG sample interfaced with PYTHIA employing a special parameter tune for multiparton interactions. The uncertainties due to these four sources are taken as a difference between the nominal and the varied sample and symmetrised.

Following the PDF4LHC [77] recommendations, three different PDF sets are compared using a reweighting technique for the signal $t\bar{t}$ MC sample to estimate the uncertainty due to the PDF set choice: CT10 NLO (nominal PDF set) [25], MSTW 2008 68% CL NLO [52] and NNPDF 2.3 NLO [78]. Each PDF set has a different prescription for using its error sets to evaluate the uncertainty: the CT10 set uses a symmetric Hessian matrix, the MSTW set uses an asymmetric Hessian matrix and the NNPDF set uses a standard deviation for the uncertainty calculation. For the three PDF sets, the variations for all different PDF parameters are evaluated within the corresponding set. Half of the width of the largest deviation from nominal among all three sets is taken as the PDF uncertainty.

6.4 NLO and off-shell effects in the top-quark decay

The $t\bar{t}$ MC simulation utilised to extract the decay width uses NLO matrix elements for top-quark pair production and LO matrix elements with approximate implementation of finite-width and interference effects for the decay of the top quarks. A theoretical study [79] performed in the $e\mu$ decay channel of the $t\bar{t}$ system indicates that taking into account off-shell effects, which include the contributions from $t\bar{t}$ and Wt single-top production as well as their interference, is important for the precision measurements of top-quark properties. However, there is no MC implementation yet of NLO decay and off-shell effects for the lepton+jets final state. The potential impact of ignoring these effects was tested in two different ways. First, the parton-level $m_{\ell b}$ distribution of a sum of $t\bar{t}$ and Wt single-top contributions without these effects taken into account was reweighted to the $m_{\ell b}$ distribution provided by the authors of Ref. [79] which corresponds to the $WWb\bar{b}$ calculation at NLO. Second, the measurement was repeated requiring $m_{\ell b} < 150$ GeV, limiting the analysis to the region where these effects are expected to be suppressed according to Ref. [79]. Both cross-checks yield a difference in the measured top-quark decay width of less than 0.5 GeV. For more precise future measurements, it would be beneficial to have an MC simulation providing an NLO description of the top-quark decay accounting for off-shell effects.

Table 2: Summary of systematic uncertainties in the top-quark decay width measurement.

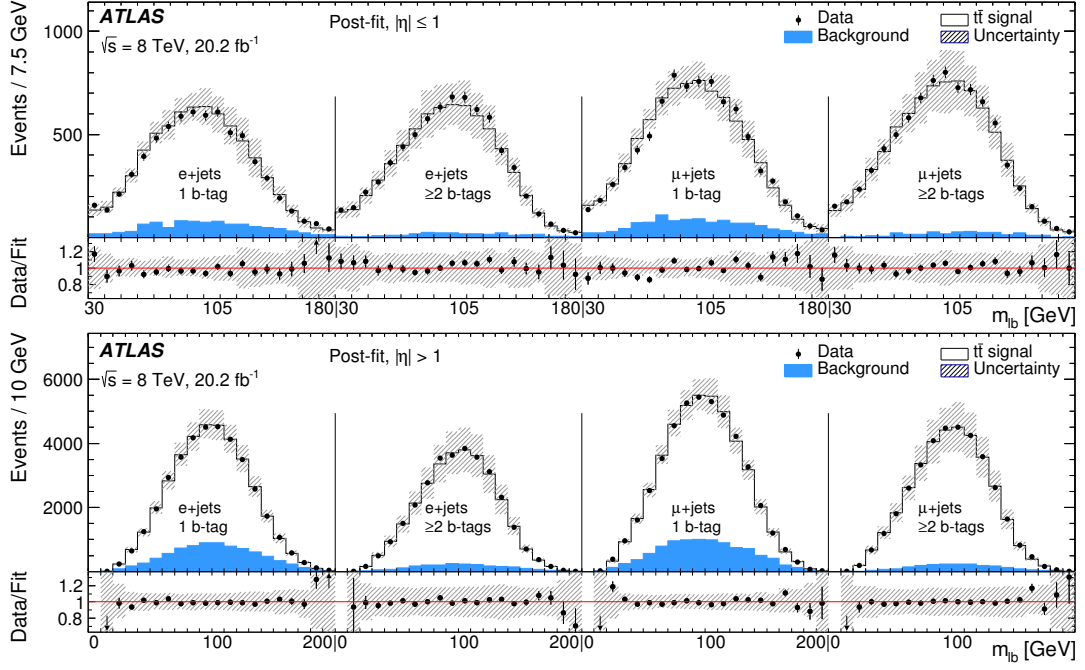
Source	Uncertainty [GeV]
Detector model	
Electron	+0.14 -0.07
Muon	+0.11 -0.06
Jet energy scale	+0.42 -0.30
Jet energy resolution	± 0.27
Jet vertex fraction	+0.13 -0.03
Jet reconstruction efficiency	± 0.03
Missing transverse momentum	± 0.01
<i>b</i> -Tagging	+0.32 -0.24
Signal model	
ME event generator	± 0.41
Colour reconnection	± 0.19
Underlying event	± 0.11
Radiation	± 0.07
PDF	± 0.06
PS/hadronisation	± 0.05
Background model	
Multijet	+0.04 -0.00
<i>W</i> +jets	± 0.02
Single top	< 0.01
Template statistical uncertainty	± 0.07
Luminosity	+0.03 -0.00
Total systematic uncertainty	+0.79 -0.68

6.5 Template statistical uncertainty

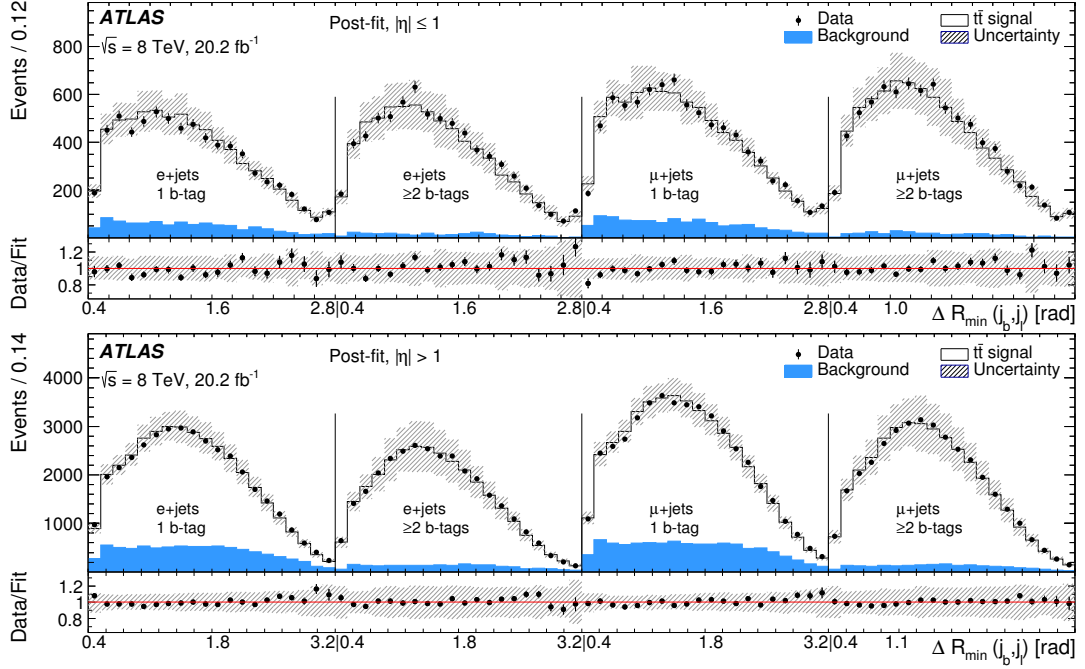
To estimate the systematic uncertainty arising from the limited MC sample size used to produce the templates, the content of each bin of the signal and background templates is varied within its statistical uncertainty and a fit to the nominal distribution is repeated. The standard deviation of the distribution of top-quark decay width values obtained from the fits with the fluctuated templates is quoted as the systematic effect from the template statistical uncertainty.

7 Result

The binned likelihood template fit is applied to the data using the concatenated distributions of $m_{\ell b}$ and $\Delta R_{\min}(j_b, j_l)$ in the eight analysis regions. Figure 5 shows post-fit distributions for $m_{\ell b}$ and $\Delta R_{\min}(j_b, j_l)$. The post-fit yields of the $t\bar{t}$ signal and each background contribution are summarised in Table 3.



(a)



(b)

Figure 5: Post-fit distributions based on the best-fit templates for (a) $m_{\ell b}$ and (b) $\Delta R_{\min}(j_b, j_l)$. The background contributions are combined. The lower panel shows the ratio of data to post-fit sum of $t\bar{t}$ signal and background. The eight analysis regions corresponding to different b -tag multiplicity and jet pseudorapidity are shown. The vertical lines show the boundaries between the binned variables in different lepton and b -tag regions. The hatched band shows the total uncertainty. The systematic uncertainties are calculated bin-by-bin from the systematic variations by adding differences in quadrature. Then, statistical and systematic uncertainties are added in quadrature to obtain the quoted total uncertainty.

Table 3: Post-fit yields of the $t\bar{t}$ signal and background contributions. The yields represent the sum of the number of events in each of the eight analysis regions. Only the normalisation uncertainties are shown.

Sample	Post-fit yields
$t\bar{t}$	156360 ± 750
Single top	5700 ± 930
$W + b\bar{b}/c\bar{c}$	7060 ± 510
$W + c$	1650 ± 550
$W + \text{light}$	1603 ± 65
$Z + \text{jets}$	2770 ± 710
Diboson	320 ± 240
Multijet	6070 ± 380
Total	181600 ± 1700
Data	181536

The likelihood curve obtained from the fit can be seen in Figure 6 together with a quadratic fit to the likelihood points. The statistical uncertainty, which includes contributions from the data statistics and the uncertainties in the backgrounds normalisation, is extracted from the likelihood curve's width at $-2\Delta\ln(\mathcal{L}) = 1$ around the minimum. The likelihood values are shifted so that the minimum corresponds to $-2\Delta\ln(\mathcal{L}) = 0$.

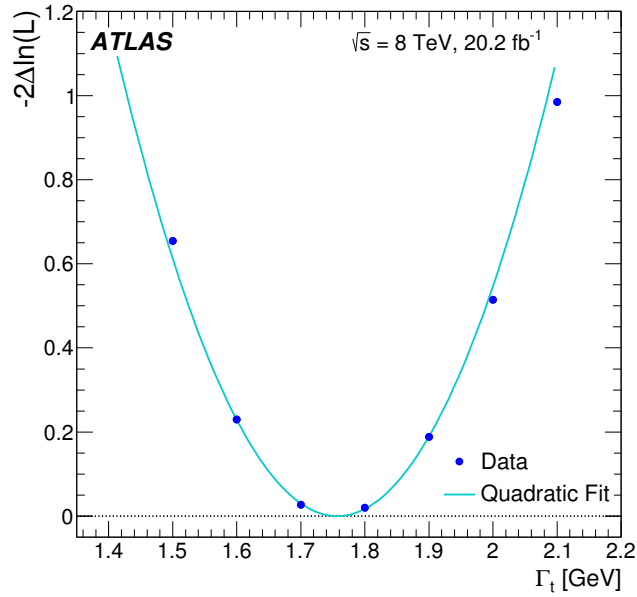


Figure 6: Twice the negative logarithm of the likelihood obtained from the binned likelihood template fit to data. A quadratic fit is performed around the minimum.

The measured decay width for a top-quark mass of 172.5 GeV is

$$\Gamma_t = 1.76 \pm 0.33 \text{ (stat.) } {}^{+0.79}_{-0.68} \text{ (syst.) GeV} = 1.76^{+0.86}_{-0.76} \text{ GeV},$$

in good agreement with the SM prediction of 1.322 GeV [9]. A consistency check was performed by repeating the measurement in the individual b -tag regions and confirms that the results are consistent with the measured value. A fit based only on the observable $m_{\ell b}$ leads to a total uncertainty which is about 0.3 GeV larger.

In comparison to the previous direct top-quark decay width measurement in Ref. [18], the total uncertainty of this measurement is smaller by a factor of around two. However, this result is still less precise than indirect measurements and, thus, alternative (BSM) models discussed in Section 1 cannot be ruled out with the current sensitivity.

The impact of the assumed top-quark mass on the decay width measurement is estimated by varying the mass around the nominal value of $m_t = 172.5$ GeV. Changing the top-quark mass by ± 0.5 GeV leads to a shift in the measured top-quark decay width of up to around 0.2 GeV.

8 Conclusion

A direct measurement of the decay width of the top quark exploiting $t\bar{t}$ events in the lepton+jets channel was performed using data taken in proton–proton collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV corresponding to an integrated luminosity of 20.2 fb^{-1} recorded by the ATLAS detector at the LHC. The decay width of the top quark is extracted using a binned likelihood template fit to data based on two observables related to the hadronic and the semileptonic decay branches of the $t\bar{t}$ pair. The top-quark decay width is measured to be $\Gamma_t = 1.76 \pm 0.33$ (stat.) $^{+0.79}_{-0.68}$ (syst.) GeV for $m_t = 172.5$ GeV, which is in a good agreement with SM predictions.

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The ATLAS Collaboration

M. Aaboud^{137d}, G. Aad⁸⁸, B. Abbott¹¹⁵, O. Abidinov^{12,*}, B. Abeloos¹¹⁹, S.H. Abidi¹⁶¹, O.S. AbouZeid¹³⁹, N.L. Abraham¹⁵¹, H. Abramowicz¹⁵⁵, H. Abreu¹⁵⁴, R. Abreu¹¹⁸, Y. Abulaiti^{148a,148b}, B.S. Acharya^{167a,167b,a}, S. Adachi¹⁵⁷, L. Adamczyk^{41a}, J. Adelman¹¹⁰, M. Adersberger¹⁰², T. Adye¹³³, A.A. Affolder¹³⁹, Y. Afik¹⁵⁴, T. Agatonovic-Jovin¹⁴, C. Agheorghiesei^{28c}, J.A. Aguilar-Saavedra^{128a,128f}, S.P. Ahlen²⁴, F. Ahmadov^{68,b}, G. Aielli^{135a,135b}, S. Akatsuka⁷¹, H. Akerstedt^{148a,148b}, T.P.A. Åkesson⁸⁴, E. Akilli⁵², A.V. Akimov⁹⁸, G.L. Alberghi^{22a,22b}, J. Albert¹⁷², P. Albicocco⁵⁰, M.J. Alconada Verzini⁷⁴, S.C. Alderweireldt¹⁰⁸, M. Aleksa³², I.N. Aleksandrov⁶⁸, C. Alexa^{28b}, G. Alexander¹⁵⁵, T. Alexopoulos¹⁰, M. Alhroob¹¹⁵, B. Ali¹³⁰, M. Aliev^{76a,76b}, G. Alimonti^{94a}, J. Alison³³, S.P. Alkire³⁸, B.M.M. Allbrooke¹⁵¹, B.W. Allen¹¹⁸, P.P. Allport¹⁹, A. Aloisio^{106a,106b}, A. Alonso³⁹, F. Alonso⁷⁴, C. Alpigiani¹⁴⁰, A.A. Alshehri⁵⁶, M.I. Alstady⁸⁸, B. Alvarez Gonzalez³², D. Álvarez Piqueras¹⁷⁰, M.G. Alvigi^{106a,106b}, B.T. Amadio¹⁶, Y. Amaral Coutinho^{26a}, C. Amelung²⁵, D. Amidei⁹², S.P. Amor Dos Santos^{128a,128c}, S. Amoroso³², G. Amundsen²⁵, C. Anastopoulos¹⁴¹, L.S. Ancu⁵², N. Andari¹⁹, T. Andeen¹¹, C.F. Anders^{60b}, J.K. Anders⁷⁷, K.J. Anderson³³, A. Andreazza^{94a,94b}, V. Andrei^{60a}, S. Angelidakis³⁷, I. Angelozzi¹⁰⁹, A. Angerami³⁸, A.V. Anisenkov^{111,c}, N. Anjos¹³, A. Annovi^{126a,126b}, C. Antel^{60a}, M. Antonelli⁵⁰, A. Antonov^{100,*}, D.J. Antrim¹⁶⁶, F. Anulli^{134a}, M. Aoki⁶⁹, L. Aperio Bella³², G. Arabidze⁹³, Y. Arai⁶⁹, J.P. Araque^{128a}, V. Araujo Ferraz^{26a}, A.T.H. Arce⁴⁸, R.E. Ardell⁸⁰, F.A. Arduh⁷⁴, J-F. Arguin⁹⁷, S. Argyropoulos⁶⁶, M. Arik^{20a}, A.J. Armbruster³², L.J. Armitage⁷⁹, O. Arnaez¹⁶¹, H. Arnold⁵¹, M. Arratia³⁰, O. Arslan²³, A. Artamonov^{99,*}, G. Artoni¹²², S. Artz⁸⁶, S. Asai¹⁵⁷, N. Asbah⁴⁵, A. Ashkenazi¹⁵⁵, L. Asquith¹⁵¹, K. Assamagan²⁷, R. Astalos^{146a}, M. Atkinson¹⁶⁹, N.B. Atlay¹⁴³, K. Augsten¹³⁰, G. Avolio³², B. Axen¹⁶, M.K. Ayoub^{35a}, G. Azuelos^{97,d}, A.E. Baas^{60a}, M.J. Baca¹⁹, H. Bachacou¹³⁸, K. Bachas^{76a,76b}, M. Backes¹²², P. Bagnaia^{134a,134b}, M. Bahmani⁴², H. Bahrasemani¹⁴⁴, J.T. Baines¹³³, M. Bajic³⁹, O.K. Baker¹⁷⁹, P.J. Bakker¹⁰⁹, E.M. Baldin^{111,c}, P. Balek¹⁷⁵, F. Balli¹³⁸, W.K. Balunas¹²⁴, E. Banas⁴², A. Bandyopadhyay²³, Sw. Banerjee^{176,e}, A.A.E. Bannoura¹⁷⁸, L. Barak¹⁵⁵, E.L. Barberio⁹¹, D. Barberis^{53a,53b}, M. Barbero⁸⁸, T. Barillari¹⁰³, M-S Barisits³², J.T. Barkeloo¹¹⁸, T. Barklow¹⁴⁵, N. Barlow³⁰, S.L. Barnes^{36c}, B.M. Barnett¹³³, R.M. Barnett¹⁶, Z. Barnovska-Blenessy^{36a}, A. Baroncelli^{136a}, G. Barone²⁵, A.J. Barr¹²², L. Barranco Navarro¹⁷⁰, F. Barreiro⁸⁵, J. Barreiro Guimarães da Costa^{35a}, R. Bartoldus¹⁴⁵, A.E. Barton⁷⁵, P. Bartos^{146a}, A. Basalae¹²⁵, A. Bassalat^{119,f}, R.L. Bates⁵⁶, S.J. Batista¹⁶¹, J.R. Batley³⁰, M. Battaglia¹³⁹, M. Bauce^{134a,134b}, F. Bauer¹³⁸, H.S. Bawa^{145,g}, J.B. Beacham¹¹³, M.D. Beattie⁷⁵, T. Beau⁸³, P.H. Beauchemin¹⁶⁵, P. Bechtel²³, H.P. Beck^{18,h}, H.C. Beck⁵⁷, K. Becker¹²², M. Becker⁸⁶, C. Becot¹¹², A.J. Beddall^{20e}, A. Beddall^{20b}, V.A. Bednyakov⁶⁸, M. Bedognetti¹⁰⁹, C.P. Bee¹⁵⁰, T.A. Beermann³², M. Begalli^{26a}, M. Begel²⁷, J.K. Behr⁴⁵, A.S. Bell⁸¹, G. Bella¹⁵⁵, L. Bellagamba^{22a}, A. Bellerive³¹, M. Bellomo¹⁵⁴, K. Belotskiy¹⁰⁰, O. Beltramello³², N.L. Belyaev¹⁰⁰, O. Benary^{155,*}, D. Bencheikroun^{137a}, M. Bender¹⁰², N. Benekos¹⁰, Y. Benhammou¹⁵⁵, E. Benhar Noccioli¹⁷⁹, J. Benitez⁶⁶, D.P. Benjamin⁴⁸, M. Benoit⁵², J.R. Bensinger²⁵, S. Bentvelsen¹⁰⁹, L. Beresford¹²², M. Beretta⁵⁰, D. Berge¹⁰⁹, E. Bergeas Kuutmann¹⁶⁸, N. Berger⁵, L.J. Bergsten²⁵, J. Beringer¹⁶, S. Berlendis⁵⁸, N.R. Bernard⁸⁹, G. Bernardi⁸³, C. Bernius¹⁴⁵, F.U. Bernlochner²³, T. Berry⁸⁰, P. Berta⁸⁶, C. Bertella^{35a}, G. Bertoli^{148a,148b}, I.A. Bertram⁷⁵, C. Bertsche⁴⁵, G.J. Besjes³⁹, O. Bessidskaia Bylund^{148a,148b}, M. Bessner⁴⁵, N. Besson¹³⁸, A. Bethani⁸⁷, S. Bethke¹⁰³, A. Betti²³, A.J. Bevan⁷⁹, J. Beyer¹⁰³, R.M. Bianchi¹²⁷, O. Biebel¹⁰², D. Biedermann¹⁷, R. Bielski⁸⁷, K. Bierwagen⁸⁶, N.V. Biesuz^{126a,126b}, M. Biglietti^{136a}, T.R.V. Billoud⁹⁷, H. Bilokon⁵⁰, M. Bindi⁵⁷, A. Bingul^{20b}, C. Bini^{134a,134b}, S. Biondi^{22a,22b}, T. Bisanz⁵⁷, C. Bittrich⁴⁷, D.M. Bjergaard⁴⁸, J.E. Black¹⁴⁵, K.M. Black²⁴, R.E. Blair⁶, T. Blazek^{146a}, I. Bloch⁴⁵, C. Blocker²⁵, A. Blue⁵⁶, U. Blumenschein⁷⁹, S. Blunier^{34a}, G.J. Bobbink¹⁰⁹,

V.S. Bobrovnikov^{111,c}, S.S. Bocchetta⁸⁴, A. Bocci⁴⁸, C. Bock¹⁰², M. Boehler⁵¹, D. Boerner¹⁷⁸, D. Bogavac¹⁰², A.G. Bogdanchikov¹¹¹, C. Bohm^{148a}, V. Boisvert⁸⁰, P. Bokan^{168,i}, T. Bold^{41a}, A.S. Boldyrev¹⁰¹, A.E. Bolz^{60b}, M. Bomben⁸³, M. Bona⁷⁹, M. Boonekamp¹³⁸, A. Borisov¹³², G. Borissov⁷⁵, J. Bortfeldt³², D. Bortoletto¹²², V. Bortolotto^{62a}, D. Boscherini^{22a}, M. Bosman¹³, J.D. Bossio Sola²⁹, J. Boudreau¹²⁷, E.V. Bouhova-Thacker⁷⁵, D. Boumediene³⁷, C. Bourdarios¹¹⁹, S.K. Boutle⁵⁶, A. Boveia¹¹³, J. Boyd³², I.R. Boyko⁶⁸, A.J. Bozson⁸⁰, J. Bracinik¹⁹, A. Brandt⁸, G. Brandt⁵⁷, O. Brandt^{60a}, F. Braren⁴⁵, U. Bratzler¹⁵⁸, B. Brau⁸⁹, J.E. Brau¹¹⁸, W.D. Breaden Madden⁵⁶, K. Brendlinger⁴⁵, A.J. Brennan⁹¹, L. Brenner¹⁰⁹, R. Brenner¹⁶⁸, S. Bressler¹⁷⁵, D.L. Briglin¹⁹, T.M. Bristow⁴⁹, D. Britton⁵⁶, D. Britzger⁴⁵, F.M. Brochu³⁰, I. Brock²³, R. Brock⁹³, G. Brooijmans³⁸, T. Brooks⁸⁰, W.K. Brooks^{34b}, J. Brosamer¹⁶, E. Brost¹¹⁰, J.H. Broughton¹⁹, P.A. Bruckman de Renstrom⁴², D. Bruncko^{146b}, A. Bruni^{22a}, G. Bruni^{22a}, L.S. Bruni¹⁰⁹, S. Bruno^{135a,135b}, B.H. Brunt³⁰, M. Bruschi^{22a}, N. Bruscino¹²⁷, P. Bryant³³, L. Bryngemark⁴⁵, T. Buanes¹⁵, Q. Buat¹⁴⁴, P. Buchholz¹⁴³, A.G. Buckley⁵⁶, I.A. Budagov⁶⁸, F. Buehrer⁵¹, M.K. Bugge¹²¹, O. Bulekov¹⁰⁰, D. Bullock⁸, T.J. Burch¹¹⁰, S. Burdin⁷⁷, C.D. Burgard¹⁰⁹, A.M. Burger⁵, B. Burghgrave¹¹⁰, K. Burka⁴², S. Burke¹³³, I. Burmeister⁴⁶, J.T.P. Burr¹²², D. Büscher⁵¹, V. Büscher⁸⁶, P. Bussey⁵⁶, J.M. Butler²⁴, C.M. Buttar⁵⁶, J.M. Butterworth⁸¹, P. Butti³², W. Buttinger²⁷, A. Buzatu¹⁵³, A.R. Buzykaev^{111,c}, S. Cabrera Urbán¹⁷⁰, D. Caforio¹³⁰, H. Cai¹⁶⁹, V.M. Cairo^{40a,40b}, O. Cakir^{4a}, N. Calace⁵², P. Calafiura¹⁶, A. Calandri⁸⁸, G. Calderini⁸³, P. Calfayan⁶⁴, G. Callea^{40a,40b}, L.P. Caloba^{26a}, S. Calvente Lopez⁸⁵, D. Calvet³⁷, S. Calvet³⁷, T.P. Calvet⁸⁸, R. Camacho Toro³³, S. Camarda³², P. Camarri^{135a,135b}, D. Cameron¹²¹, R. Caminal Armadans¹⁶⁹, C. Camincher⁵⁸, S. Campana³², M. Campanelli⁸¹, A. Camplani^{94a,94b}, A. Campoverde¹⁴³, V. Canale^{106a,106b}, M. Cano Bret^{36c}, J. Cantero¹¹⁶, T. Cao¹⁵⁵, M.D.M. Capeans Garrido³², I. Caprini^{28b}, M. Caprini^{28b}, M. Capua^{40a,40b}, R.M. Carbone³⁸, R. Cardarelli^{135a}, F. Cardillo⁵¹, I. Carli¹³¹, T. Carli³², G. Carlino^{106a}, B.T. Carlson¹²⁷, L. Carminati^{94a,94b}, R.M.D. Carney^{148a,148b}, S. Caron¹⁰⁸, E. Carquin^{34b}, S. Carrá^{94a,94b}, G.D. Carrillo-Montoya³², D. Casadei¹⁹, M.P. Casado^{13,j}, A.F. Casha¹⁶¹, M. Casolino¹³, D.W. Casper¹⁶⁶, R. Castelijns¹⁰⁹, V. Castillo Gimenez¹⁷⁰, N.F. Castro^{128a,k}, A. Catinaccio³², J.R. Catmore¹²¹, A. Cattai³², J. Caudron²³, V. Cavaliere¹⁶⁹, E. Cavallaro¹³, D. Cavalli^{94a}, M. Cavalli-Sforza¹³, V. Cavasinni^{126a,126b}, E. Celebi^{20d}, F. Ceradini^{136a,136b}, L. Cerda Alberich¹⁷⁰, A.S. Cerqueira^{26b}, A. Cerri¹⁵¹, L. Cerrito^{135a,135b}, F. Cerutti¹⁶, A. Cervelli^{22a,22b}, S.A. Cetin^{20d}, A. Chafaq^{137a}, D. Chakraborty¹¹⁰, S.K. Chan⁵⁹, W.S. Chan¹⁰⁹, Y.L. Chan^{62a}, P. Chang¹⁶⁹, J.D. Chapman³⁰, D.G. Charlton¹⁹, C.C. Chau³¹, C.A. Chavez Barajas¹⁵¹, S. Che¹¹³, S. Cheatham^{167a,167c}, A. Chegwiddden⁹³, S. Chekanov⁶, S.V. Chekulaev^{163a}, G.A. Chelkov^{68,l}, M.A. Chelstowska³², C. Chen^{36a}, C. Chen⁶⁷, H. Chen²⁷, J. Chen^{36a}, S. Chen^{35b}, S. Chen¹⁵⁷, X. Chen^{35c,m}, Y. Chen⁷⁰, H.C. Cheng⁹², H.J. Cheng^{35a,35d}, A. Cheplakov⁶⁸, E. Cheremushkina¹³², R. Cherkaoui El Moursli^{137e}, E. Cheu⁷, K. Cheung⁶³, L. Chevalier¹³⁸, V. Chiarella⁵⁰, G. Chiarelli^{126a,126b}, G. Chiodini^{76a}, A.S. Chisholm³², A. Chitan^{28b}, Y.H. Chiu¹⁷², M.V. Chizhov⁶⁸, K. Choi⁶⁴, A.R. Chomont³⁷, S. Chouridou¹⁵⁶, Y.S. Chow^{62a}, V. Christodoulou⁸¹, M.C. Chu^{62a}, J. Chudoba¹²⁹, A.J. Chuinard⁹⁰, J.J. Chwastowski⁴², L. Chytka¹¹⁷, A.K. Ciftci^{4a}, D. Cinca⁴⁶, V. Cindro⁷⁸, I.A. Cioara²³, A. Ciochio¹⁶, F. Ciotto^{106a,106b}, Z.H. Citron¹⁷⁵, M. Citterio^{94a}, M. Ciubancan^{28b}, A. Clark⁵², B.L. Clark⁵⁹, M.R. Clark³⁸, P.J. Clark⁴⁹, R.N. Clarke¹⁶, C. Clement^{148a,148b}, Y. Coadou⁸⁸, M. Cobal^{167a,167c}, A. Coccaro⁵², J. Cochran⁶⁷, L. Colasurdo¹⁰⁸, B. Cole³⁸, A.P. Colijn¹⁰⁹, J. Collot⁵⁸, T. Colombo¹⁶⁶, P. Conde Muiño^{128a,128b}, E. Coniavitis⁵¹, S.H. Connell^{147b}, I.A. Connelly⁸⁷, S. Constantinescu^{28b}, G. Conti³², F. Conventi^{106a,n}, M. Cooke¹⁶, A.M. Cooper-Sarkar¹²², F. Cormier¹⁷¹, K.J.R. Cormier¹⁶¹, M. Corradi^{134a,134b}, F. Corriveau^{90,o}, A. Cortes-Gonzalez³², G. Costa^{94a}, M.J. Costa¹⁷⁰, D. Costanzo¹⁴¹, G. Cottin³⁰, G. Cowan⁸⁰, B.E. Cox⁸⁷, K. Cranmer¹¹², S.J. Crawley⁵⁶, R.A. Creager¹²⁴, G. Cree³¹, S. Crépe-Renaudin⁵⁸, F. Crescioli⁸³, W.A. Cribbs^{148a,148b}, M. Cristinziani²³, V. Croft¹¹², G. Crosetti^{40a,40b}, A. Cueto⁸⁵, T. Cuhadar Donszelmann¹⁴¹, A.R. Cukierman¹⁴⁵, J. Cummings¹⁷⁹, M. Curatolo⁵⁰, J. Cúth⁸⁶,

S. Czekerda⁴², P. Czodrowski³², G. D'amen^{22a,22b}, S. D'Auria⁵⁶, L. D'era⁸³, M. D'Onofrio⁷⁷, M.J. Da Cunha Sargedas De Sousa^{128a,128b}, C. Da Via⁸⁷, W. Dabrowski^{41a}, T. Dado^{146a}, T. Dai⁹², O. Dale¹⁵, F. Dallaire⁹⁷, C. Dallapiccola⁸⁹, M. Dam³⁹, J.R. Dandoy¹²⁴, M.F. Daneri²⁹, N.P. Dang¹⁷⁶, A.C. Daniells¹⁹, N.S. Dann⁸⁷, M. Danninger¹⁷¹, M. Dano Hoffmann¹³⁸, V. Dao¹⁵⁰, G. Darbo^{53a}, S. Darmora⁸, J. Dassoulas³, A. Dattagupta¹¹⁸, T. Daubney⁴⁵, W. Davey²³, C. David⁴⁵, T. Davidek¹³¹, D.R. Davis⁴⁸, P. Davison⁸¹, E. Dawe⁹¹, I. Dawson¹⁴¹, K. De⁸, R. de Asmundis^{106a}, A. De Benedetti¹¹⁵, S. De Castro^{22a,22b}, S. De Cecco⁸³, N. De Groot¹⁰⁸, P. de Jong¹⁰⁹, H. De la Torre⁹³, F. De Lorenzi⁶⁷, A. De Maria⁵⁷, D. De Pedis^{134a}, A. De Salvo^{134a}, U. De Sanctis^{135a,135b}, A. De Santo¹⁵¹, K. De Vasconcelos Corga⁸⁸, J.B. De Vivie De Regie¹¹⁹, R. Debbe²⁷, C. Debenedetti¹³⁹, D.V. Dedovich⁶⁸, N. Dehghanian³, I. Deigaard¹⁰⁹, M. Del Gaudio^{40a,40b}, J. Del Peso⁸⁵, D. Delgove¹¹⁹, F. Deliot¹³⁸, C.M. Delitzsch⁷, A. Dell'Acqua³², L. Dell'Asta²⁴, M. Dell'Orso^{126a,126b}, M. Della Pietra^{106a,106b}, D. della Volpe⁵², M. Delmastro⁵, C. Delporte¹¹⁹, P.A. Delsart⁵⁸, D.A. DeMarco¹⁶¹, S. Demers¹⁷⁹, M. Demichev⁶⁸, A. Demilly⁸³, S.P. Denisov¹³², D. Denysiuk¹³⁸, D. Derendarz⁴², J.E. Derkaoui^{137d}, F. Derue⁸³, P. Dervan⁷⁷, K. Desch²³, C. Deterre⁴⁵, K. Dette¹⁶¹, M.R. Devesa²⁹, P.O. Deviveiros³², A. Dewhurst¹³³, S. Dhaliwal²⁵, F.A. Di Bello⁵², A. Di Ciaccio^{135a,135b}, L. Di Ciaccio⁵, W.K. Di Clemente¹²⁴, C. Di Donato^{106a,106b}, A. Di Girolamo³², B. Di Girolamo³², B. Di Micco^{136a,136b}, R. Di Nardo³², K.F. Di Petrillo⁵⁹, A. Di Simone⁵¹, R. Di Sipio¹⁶¹, D. Di Valentino³¹, C. Diaconu⁸⁸, M. Diamond¹⁶¹, F.A. Dias³⁹, M.A. Diaz^{34a}, E.B. Diehl⁹², J. Dietrich¹⁷, S. Díez Cornell⁴⁵, A. Dimitrievska¹⁴, J. Dingfelder²³, P. Dita^{28b}, S. Dita^{28b}, F. Dittus³², F. Djama⁸⁸, T. Djobava^{54b}, J.I. Djuvsland^{60a}, M.A.B. do Vale^{26c}, D. Dobos³², M. Dobre^{28b}, D. Dodsworth²⁵, C. Doglioni⁸⁴, J. Dolejsi¹³¹, Z. Dolezal¹³¹, M. Donadelli^{26d}, S. Donati^{126a,126b}, P. Dondero^{123a,123b}, J. Donini³⁷, J. Dopke¹³³, A. Doria^{106a}, M.T. Dova⁷⁴, A.T. Doyle⁵⁶, E. Drechsler⁵⁷, M. Dris¹⁰, Y. Du^{36b}, J. Duarte-Campderros¹⁵⁵, F. Dubinin⁹⁸, A. Dubreuil⁵², E. Duchovni¹⁷⁵, G. Duckeck¹⁰², A. Ducourthial⁸³, O.A. Ducu^{97,p}, D. Duda¹⁰⁹, A. Dudarev³², A. Chr. Dudder⁸⁶, E.M. Duffield¹⁶, L. Duflo¹¹⁹, M. Dührssen³², C. Dulsen¹⁷⁸, M. Dumancic¹⁷⁵, A.E. Dumitriu^{28b}, A.K. Duncan⁵⁶, M. Dunford^{60a}, A. Duperrin⁸⁸, H. Duran Yildiz^{4a}, M. Düren⁵⁵, A. Durglishvili^{54b}, D. Duschinger⁴⁷, B. Dutta⁴⁵, D. Duvnjak¹, M. Dyndal⁴⁵, B.S. Dziedzic⁴², C. Eckardt⁴⁵, K.M. Ecker¹⁰³, R.C. Edgar⁹², T. Eifert³², G. Eigen¹⁵, K. Einsweiler¹⁶, T. Ekelof¹⁶⁸, M. El Kacimi^{137c}, R. El Kosseifi⁸⁸, V. Ellajosyula⁸⁸, M. Ellert¹⁶⁸, S. Elles⁵, F. Ellinghaus¹⁷⁸, A.A. Elliot¹⁷², N. Ellis³², J. Elmsheuser²⁷, M. Elsing³², D. Emelianov¹³³, Y. Enari¹⁵⁷, J.S. Ennis¹⁷³, M.B. Epland⁴⁸, J. Erdmann⁴⁶, A. Ereditato¹⁸, M. Ernst²⁷, S. Errede¹⁶⁹, M. Escalier¹¹⁹, C. Escobar¹⁷⁰, B. Esposito⁵⁰, O. Estrada Pastor¹⁷⁰, A.I. Etienne¹³⁸, E. Etzion¹⁵⁵, H. Evans⁶⁴, A. Ezhilov¹²⁵, M. Ezzi^{137e}, F. Fabbri^{22a,22b}, L. Fabbri^{22a,22b}, V. Fabiani¹⁰⁸, G. Facini⁸¹, R.M. Fakhruddinov¹³², S. Falciano^{134a}, R.J. Falla⁸¹, J. Faltova³², Y. Fang^{35a}, M. Fanti^{94a,94b}, A. Farbin⁸, A. Farilla^{136a}, C. Farina¹²⁷, E.M. Farina^{123a,123b}, T. Farooque⁹³, S. Farrell¹⁶, S.M. Farrington¹⁷³, P. Farthouat³², F. Fassi^{137e}, P. Fassnacht³², D. Fassouliotis⁹, M. Faucci Giannelli⁴⁹, A. Favareto^{53a,53b}, W.J. Fawcett¹²², L. Fayard¹¹⁹, O.L. Fedin^{125,q}, W. Fedorko¹⁷¹, S. Feigl¹²¹, L. Feligioni⁸⁸, C. Feng^{36b}, E.J. Feng³², M.J. Fenton⁵⁶, A.B. Fenyuk¹³², L. Feremenga⁸, P. Fernandez Martinez¹⁷⁰, J. Ferrando⁴⁵, A. Ferrari¹⁶⁸, P. Ferrari¹⁰⁹, R. Ferrari^{123a}, D.E. Ferreira de Lima^{60b}, A. Ferrer¹⁷⁰, D. Ferrere⁵², C. Ferretti⁹², F. Fiedler⁸⁶, A. Filipčič⁷⁸, M. Filipuzzi⁴⁵, F. Filthaut¹⁰⁸, M. Fincke-Keeler¹⁷², K.D. Finelli²⁴, M.C.N. Fiolhais^{128a,128c,r}, L. Fiorini¹⁷⁰, A. Fischer², C. Fischer¹³, J. Fischer¹⁷⁸, W.C. Fisher⁹³, N. Flaschel⁴⁵, I. Fleck¹⁴³, P. Fleischmann⁹², R.R.M. Fletcher¹²⁴, T. Flick¹⁷⁸, B.M. Flierl¹⁰², L.R. Flores Castillo^{62a}, M.J. Flowerdew¹⁰³, G.T. Forcolin⁸⁷, A. Formica¹³⁸, F.A. Förster¹³, A. Forti⁸⁷, A.G. Foster¹⁹, D. Fournier¹¹⁹, H. Fox⁷⁵, S. Fracchia¹⁴¹, P. Francavilla^{126a,126b}, M. Franchini^{22a,22b}, S. Franchino^{60a}, D. Francis³², L. Franconi¹²¹, M. Franklin⁵⁹, M. Frate¹⁶⁶, M. Fraternali^{123a,123b}, D. Freeborn⁸¹, S.M. Fressard-Batraneanu³², B. Freund⁹⁷, D. Froidevaux³², J.A. Frost¹²², C. Fukunaga¹⁵⁸, T. Fusayasu¹⁰⁴, J. Fuster¹⁷⁰, O. Gabizon¹⁵⁴, A. Gabrielli^{22a,22b}, A. Gabrielli¹⁶, G.P. Gach^{41a},

S. Gadatsch³², S. Gadomski⁸⁰, G. Gagliardi^{53a,53b}, L.G. Gagnon⁹⁷, C. Galea¹⁰⁸, B. Galhardo^{128a,128c}, E.J. Gallas¹²², B.J. Gallop¹³³, P. Gallus¹³⁰, G. Galster³⁹, K.K. Gan¹¹³, S. Ganguly³⁷, Y. Gao⁷⁷, Y.S. Gao^{145,g}, F.M. Garay Walls^{34a}, C. García¹⁷⁰, J.E. García Navarro¹⁷⁰, J.A. García Pascual^{35a}, M. Garcia-Sciveres¹⁶, R.W. Gardner³³, N. Garelli¹⁴⁵, V. Garonne¹²¹, A. Gascon Bravo⁴⁵, K. Gasnikova⁴⁵, C. Gatti⁵⁰, A. Gaudiello^{53a,53b}, G. Gaudio^{123a}, I.L. Gavrilenko⁹⁸, C. Gay¹⁷¹, G. Gaycken²³, E.N. Gazis¹⁰, C.N.P. Gee¹³³, J. Geisen⁵⁷, M. Geisen⁸⁶, M.P. Geisler^{60a}, K. Gellerstedt^{148a,148b}, C. Gemme^{53a}, M.H. Genest⁵⁸, C. Geng⁹², S. Gentile^{134a,134b}, C. Gentsos¹⁵⁶, S. George⁸⁰, D. Gerbaudo¹³, G. Geßner⁴⁶, S. Ghasemi¹⁴³, M. Ghneimat²³, B. Giacobbe^{22a}, S. Giagu^{134a,134b}, N. Giangiacomi^{22a,22b}, P. Giannetti^{126a,126b}, S.M. Gibson⁸⁰, M. Gignac¹⁷¹, M. Gilchriese¹⁶, D. Gillberg³¹, G. Gilles¹⁷⁸, D.M. Gingrich^{3,d}, M.P. Giordani^{167a,167c}, F.M. Giorgi^{22a}, P.F. Giraud¹³⁸, P. Giromini⁵⁹, G. Giugliarelli^{167a,167c}, D. Giugni^{94a}, F. Giuli¹²², C. Giuliani¹⁰³, M. Giulini^{60b}, B.K. Gjølsten¹²¹, S. Gkaitatzis¹⁵⁶, I. Gkialas^{9,s}, E.L. Gkougkousis¹³, P. Gkoutoumis¹⁰, L.K. Gladilin¹⁰¹, C. Glasman⁸⁵, J. Glatzer¹³, P.C.F. Glaysheer⁴⁵, A. Glazov⁴⁵, M. Goblirsch-Kolb²⁵, J. Godlewski⁴², S. Goldfarb⁹¹, T. Golling⁵², D. Golubkov¹³², A. Gomes^{128a,128b,128d}, R. Gonçalves^{128a}, R. Goncalves Gama^{26a}, J. Goncalves Pinto Firmino Da Costa¹³⁸, G. Gonella⁵¹, L. Gonella¹⁹, A. Gongadze⁶⁸, J.L. Gonski⁵⁹, S. González de la Hoz¹⁷⁰, S. Gonzalez-Sevilla⁵², L. Goossens³², P.A. Gorbounov⁹⁹, H.A. Gordon²⁷, I. Gorelov¹⁰⁷, B. Gorini³², E. Gorini^{76a,76b}, A. Gorišek⁷⁸, A.T. Goshaw⁴⁸, C. Gössling⁴⁶, M.I. Gostkin⁶⁸, C.A. Gottardo²³, C.R. Goudet¹¹⁹, D. Goujdami^{137c}, A.G. Goussiou¹⁴⁰, N. Govender^{147b,t}, E. Gozani¹⁵⁴, I. Grabowska-Bold^{41a}, P.O.J. Gradin¹⁶⁸, J. Gramling¹⁶⁶, E. Gramstad¹²¹, S. Grancagnolo¹⁷, V. Gratchev¹²⁵, P.M. Gravila^{28f}, C. Gray⁵⁶, H.M. Gray¹⁶, Z.D. Greenwood^{82,u}, C. Grefe²³, K. Gregersen⁸¹, I.M. Gregor⁴⁵, P. Grenier¹⁴⁵, K. Grevtsov⁵, J. Griffiths⁸, A.A. Grillo¹³⁹, K. Grimm⁷⁵, S. Grinstein^{13,v}, Ph. Gris³⁷, J.-F. Grivaz¹¹⁹, S. Groh⁸⁶, E. Gross¹⁷⁵, J. Grosse-Knetter⁵⁷, G.C. Grossi⁸², Z.J. Grout⁸¹, A. Grummer¹⁰⁷, L. Guan⁹², W. Guan¹⁷⁶, J. Guenther³², F. Guescini^{163a}, D. Guest¹⁶⁶, O. Gueta¹⁵⁵, B. Gui¹¹³, E. Guido^{53a,53b}, T. Guillemin⁵, S. Guindon³², U. Gul⁵⁶, C. Gumpert³², J. Guo^{36c}, W. Guo⁹², Y. Guo^{36a,w}, R. Gupta⁴³, S. Gurbuz^{20a}, G. Gustavino¹¹⁵, B.J. Gutelman¹⁵⁴, P. Gutierrez¹¹⁵, N.G. Gutierrez Ortiz⁸¹, C. Gutsche⁸¹, C. Guyot¹³⁸, M.P. Guzik^{41a}, C. Gwenlan¹²², C.B. Gwilliam⁷⁷, A. Haas¹¹², C. Haber¹⁶, H.K. Hadavand⁸, N. Haddad^{137e}, A. Hadeef⁸⁸, S. Hageböck²³, M. Hagihara¹⁶⁴, H. Hakobyan^{180,*}, M. Haleem⁴⁵, J. Haley¹¹⁶, G. Halladjian⁹³, G.D. Hallewell⁸⁸, K. Hamacher¹⁷⁸, P. Hamal¹¹⁷, K. Hamano¹⁷², A. Hamilton^{147a}, G.N. Hamity¹⁴¹, P.G. Hamnett⁴⁵, L. Han^{36a}, S. Han^{35a,35d}, K. Hanagaki^{69,x}, K. Hanawa¹⁵⁷, M. Hance¹³⁹, D.M. Handl¹⁰², B. Haney¹²⁴, P. Hanke^{60a}, J.B. Hansen³⁹, J.D. Hansen³⁹, M.C. Hansen²³, P.H. Hansen³⁹, K. Hara¹⁶⁴, A.S. Hard¹⁷⁶, T. Harenberg¹⁷⁸, F. Hariri¹¹⁹, S. Harkusha⁹⁵, P.F. Harrison¹⁷³, N.M. Hartmann¹⁰², Y. Hasegawa¹⁴², A. Hasib⁴⁹, S. Hassani¹³⁸, S. Haug¹⁸, R. Hauser⁹³, L. Hauswald⁴⁷, L.B. Havener³⁸, M. Havranek¹³⁰, C.M. Hawkes¹⁹, R.J. Hawkings³², D. Hayakawa¹⁵⁹, D. Hayden⁹³, C.P. Hays¹²², J.M. Hays⁷⁹, H.S. Hayward⁷⁷, S.J. Haywood¹³³, S.J. Head¹⁹, T. Heck⁸⁶, V. Hedberg⁸⁴, L. Heelan⁸, S. Heer²³, K.K. Heidegger⁵¹, S. Heim⁴⁵, T. Heim¹⁶, B. Heinemann^{45,y}, J.J. Heinrich¹⁰², L. Heinrich¹¹², C. Heinz⁵⁵, J. Hejbal¹²⁹, L. Helary³², A. Held¹⁷¹, S. Hellman^{148a,148b}, C. Helsens³², R.C.W. Henderson⁷⁵, Y. Heng¹⁷⁶, S. Henkelmann¹⁷¹, A.M. Henriques Correia³², S. Henrot-Versille¹¹⁹, G.H. Herbert¹⁷, H. Herde²⁵, V. Herget¹⁷⁷, Y. Hernández Jiménez^{147c}, H. Herr⁸⁶, G. Herten⁵¹, R. Hertenberger¹⁰², L. Hervas³², T.C. Herwig¹²⁴, G.G. Hesketh⁸¹, N.P. Hessey^{163a}, J.W. Hetherly⁴³, S. Higashino⁶⁹, E. Higón-Rodríguez¹⁷⁰, K. Hildebrand³³, E. Hill¹⁷², J.C. Hill³⁰, K.H. Hiller⁴⁵, S.J. Hillier¹⁹, M. Hils⁴⁷, I. Hinchliffe¹⁶, M. Hirose⁵¹, D. Hirschbuehl¹⁷⁸, B. Hiti⁷⁸, O. Hladik¹²⁹, D.R. Hlaluku^{147c}, X. Hoad⁴⁹, J. Hobbs¹⁵⁰, N. Hod^{163a}, M.C. Hodgkinson¹⁴¹, P. Hodgson¹⁴¹, A. Hoecker³², M.R. Hoferkamp¹⁰⁷, F. Hoenig¹⁰², D. Hohn²³, T.R. Holmes³³, M. Homann⁴⁶, S. Honda¹⁶⁴, T. Honda⁶⁹, T.M. Hong¹²⁷, B.H. Hooberman¹⁶⁹, W.H. Hopkins¹¹⁸, Y. Horii¹⁰⁵, A.J. Horton¹⁴⁴, J.-Y. Hostachy⁵⁸, A. Hostiuc¹⁴⁰, S. Hou¹⁵³, A. Hoummada^{137a}, J. Howarth⁸⁷, J. Hoya⁷⁴, M. Hrabovsky¹¹⁷, J. Hrdinka³², I. Hristova¹⁷,

J. Hrivnac¹¹⁹, T. Hryn'ova⁵, A. Hrynevich⁹⁶, P.J. Hsu⁶³, S.-C. Hsu¹⁴⁰, Q. Hu²⁷, S. Hu^{36c}, Y. Huang^{35a}, Z. Hubacek¹³⁰, F. Hubaut⁸⁸, F. Huegging²³, T.B. Huffman¹²², E.W. Hughes³⁸, M. Huhtinen³², R.F.H. Hunter³¹, P. Huo¹⁵⁰, N. Huseynov^{68,b}, J. Huston⁹³, J. Huth⁵⁹, R. Hyneman⁹², G. Iacobucci⁵², G. Iakovidis²⁷, I. Ibragimov¹⁴³, L. Iconomidou-Fayard¹¹⁹, Z. Idrissi^{137e}, P. Iengo³², O. Igonkina^{109,z}, T. Iizawa¹⁷⁴, Y. Ikegami⁶⁹, M. Ikeno⁶⁹, Y. Ilchenko^{11,aa}, D. Iliadis¹⁵⁶, N. Ilic¹⁴⁵, F. Iltzsche⁴⁷, G. Introzzi^{123a,123b}, P. Ioannou^{9,*}, M. Iodice^{136a}, K. Iordanidou³⁸, V. Ippolito⁵⁹, M.F. Isacson¹⁶⁸, N. Ishijima¹²⁰, M. Ishino¹⁵⁷, M. Ishitsuka¹⁵⁹, C. Issever¹²², S. Istin^{20a}, F. Ito¹⁶⁴, J.M. Iturbe Ponce^{62a}, R. Iuppa^{162a,162b}, H. Iwasaki⁶⁹, J.M. Izen⁴⁴, V. Izzo^{106a}, S. Jabbar³, P. Jackson¹, R.M. Jacobs²³, V. Jain², K.B. Jakobi⁸⁶, K. Jakobs⁵¹, S. Jakobsen⁶⁵, T. Jakoubek¹²⁹, D.O. Jamin¹¹⁶, D.K. Jana⁸², R. Jansky⁵², J. Janssen²³, M. Janus⁵⁷, P.A. Janus^{41a}, G. Jarlskog⁸⁴, N. Javadov^{68,b}, T. Javûrek⁵¹, M. Javurkova⁵¹, F. Jeanneau¹³⁸, L. Jeanty¹⁶, J. Jejelava^{54a,ab}, A. Jelinskas¹⁷³, P. Jenni^{51,ac}, C. Jeske¹⁷³, S. Jézéquel⁵, H. Ji¹⁷⁶, J. Jia¹⁵⁰, H. Jiang⁶⁷, Y. Jiang^{36a}, Z. Jiang¹⁴⁵, S. Jiggins⁸¹, J. Jimenez Pena¹⁷⁰, S. Jin^{35b}, A. Jinaru^{28b}, O. Jinnouchi¹⁵⁹, H. Jivan^{147c}, P. Johansson¹⁴¹, K.A. Johns⁷, C.A. Johnson⁶⁴, W.J. Johnson¹⁴⁰, K. Jon-And^{148a,148b}, R.W.L. Jones⁷⁵, S.D. Jones¹⁵¹, S. Jones⁷, T.J. Jones⁷⁷, J. Jongmanns^{60a}, P.M. Jorge^{128a,128b}, J. Jovicevic^{163a}, X. Ju¹⁷⁶, A. Juste Rozas^{13,v}, M.K. Köhler¹⁷⁵, A. Kaczmarska⁴², M. Kado¹¹⁹, H. Kagan¹¹³, M. Kagan¹⁴⁵, S.J. Kahn⁸⁸, T. Kaji¹⁷⁴, E. Kajomovitz¹⁵⁴, C.W. Kalderon⁸⁴, A. Kaluza⁸⁶, S. Kama⁴³, A. Kamenshchikov¹³², N. Kanaya¹⁵⁷, L. Kanjir⁷⁸, V.A. Kantserov¹⁰⁰, J. Kanzaki⁶⁹, B. Kaplan¹¹², L.S. Kaplan¹⁷⁶, D. Kar^{147c}, K. Karakostas¹⁰, N. Karastathis¹⁰, M.J. Kareem^{163b}, E. Karentzos¹⁰, S.N. Karpov⁶⁸, Z.M. Karpova⁶⁸, K. Karthik¹¹², V. Kartvelishvili⁷⁵, A.N. Karyukhin¹³², K. Kasahara¹⁶⁴, L. Kashif¹⁷⁶, R.D. Kass¹¹³, A. Kastanas¹⁴⁹, Y. Kataoka¹⁵⁷, C. Kato¹⁵⁷, A. Katre⁵², J. Katzy⁴⁵, K. Kawade⁷⁰, K. Kawagoe⁷³, T. Kawamoto¹⁵⁷, G. Kawamura⁵⁷, E.F. Kay⁷⁷, V.F. Kazanin^{111,c}, R. Keeler¹⁷², R. Kehoe⁴³, J.S. Keller³¹, E. Kellermann⁸⁴, J.J. Kempster⁸⁰, J. Kendrick¹⁹, H. Keoshkerian¹⁶¹, O. Kepka¹²⁹, B.P. Kerševan⁷⁸, S. Kersten¹⁷⁸, R.A. Keyes⁹⁰, M. Khader¹⁶⁹, F. Khalil-zada¹², A. Khanov¹¹⁶, A.G. Kharlamov^{111,c}, T. Kharlamova^{111,c}, A. Khodinov¹⁶⁰, T.J. Khoo⁵², V. Khovanskiy^{99,*}, E. Khramov⁶⁸, J. Khubua^{54b,ad}, S. Kido⁷⁰, C.R. Kilby⁸⁰, H.Y. Kim⁸, S.H. Kim¹⁶⁴, Y.K. Kim³³, N. Kimura¹⁵⁶, O.M. Kind¹⁷, B.T. King⁷⁷, D. Kirchmeier⁴⁷, J. Kirk¹³³, A.E. Kiryunin¹⁰³, T. Kishimoto¹⁵⁷, D. Kisielewska^{41a}, V. Kitali⁴⁵, O. Kivernyk⁵, E. Kladiava^{146b}, T. Klapdor-Kleingrothaus⁵¹, M.H. Klein⁹², M. Klein⁷⁷, U. Klein⁷⁷, K. Kleinknecht⁸⁶, P. Klimek¹¹⁰, A. Klimentov²⁷, R. Klingenberg^{46,*}, T. Klingl²³, T. Klioutchnikova³², F.F. Klitzner¹⁰², E.-E. Kluge^{60a}, P. Kluit¹⁰⁹, S. Kluth¹⁰³, E. Kneringer⁶⁵, E.B.F.G. Knoops⁸⁸, A. Knue¹⁰³, A. Kobayashi¹⁵⁷, D. Kobayashi⁷³, T. Kobayashi¹⁵⁷, M. Kobel⁴⁷, M. Kocian¹⁴⁵, P. Kodys¹³¹, T. Koffas³¹, E. Koffeman¹⁰⁹, N.M. Köhler¹⁰³, T. Koi¹⁴⁵, M. Kolb^{60b}, I. Koletsou⁵, A.A. Komar^{98,*}, T. Kondo⁶⁹, N. Kondrashova^{36c}, K. Köneke⁵¹, A.C. König¹⁰⁸, T. Kono^{69,ae}, R. Konoplich^{112,af}, N. Konstantinidis⁸¹, B. Konya⁸⁴, R. Kopeliansky⁶⁴, S. Koperny^{41a}, A.K. Kopp⁵¹, K. Korcyl⁴², K. Kordas¹⁵⁶, A. Korn⁸¹, A.A. Korol^{111,c}, I. Korolkov¹³, E.V. Korolkova¹⁴¹, O. Kortner¹⁰³, S. Kortner¹⁰³, T. Kosek¹³¹, V.V. Kostyukhin²³, A. Kotwal⁴⁸, A. Koulouris¹⁰, A. Kourkouveli-Charalampidi^{123a,123b}, C. Kourkouvelis⁹, E. Kourlitis¹⁴¹, V. Kouskoura²⁷, A.B. Kowalewska⁴², R. Kowalewski¹⁷², T.Z. Kowalski^{41a}, C. Kozakai¹⁵⁷, W. Kozanecki¹³⁸, A.S. Kozhin¹³², V.A. Kramarenko¹⁰¹, G. Kramberger⁷⁸, D. Krasnopevtsev¹⁰⁰, M.W. Krasny⁸³, A. Krasznahorkay³², D. Krauss¹⁰³, J.A. Kremer^{41a}, J. Kretzschmar⁷⁷, K. Kreutzfeldt⁵⁵, P. Krieger¹⁶¹, K. Krizka¹⁶, K. Kroeninger⁴⁶, H. Kroha¹⁰³, J. Kroll¹²⁹, J. Kroll¹²⁴, J. Kroseberg²³, J. Krstic¹⁴, U. Kruchonak⁶⁸, H. Krüger²³, N. Krumnack⁶⁷, M.C. Kruse⁴⁸, T. Kubota⁹¹, H. Kucuk⁸¹, S. Kудay^{4b}, J.T. Kuechler¹⁷⁸, S. Kuehn³², A. Kugel^{60a}, F. Kuger¹⁷⁷, T. Kuhl⁴⁵, V. Kukhtin⁶⁸, R. Kukla⁸⁸, Y. Kulchitsky⁹⁵, S. Kuleshov^{34b}, Y.P. Kulinich¹⁶⁹, M. Kuna^{134a,134b}, T. Kunigo⁷¹, A. Kupco¹²⁹, T. Kupfer⁴⁶, O. Kuprash¹⁵⁵, H. Kurashige⁷⁰, L.L. Kurchaninov^{163a}, Y.A. Kurochkin⁹⁵, M.G. Kurth^{35a,35d}, E.S. Kuwertz¹⁷², M. Kuze¹⁵⁹, J. Kvita¹¹⁷, T. Kwan¹⁷², D. Kyriazopoulos¹⁴¹, A. La Rosa¹⁰³, J.L. La Rosa Navarro^{26d}, L. La Rotonda^{40a,40b}, F. La Ruffa^{40a,40b}, C. Lacasta¹⁷⁰, F. Lacava^{134a,134b}, J. Lacey⁴⁵, D.P.J. Lack⁸⁷,

H. Lacker¹⁷, D. Lacour⁸³, E. Ladygin⁶⁸, R. Lafaye⁵, B. Laforge⁸³, T. Lagouri¹⁷⁹, S. Lai⁵⁷, S. Lammers⁶⁴, W. Lamp⁷, E. Lançon²⁷, U. Landgraf⁵¹, M.P.J. Landon⁷⁹, M.C. Lanfermann⁵², V.S. Lang⁴⁵, J.C. Lange¹³, R.J. Langenberg³², A.J. Lankford¹⁶⁶, F. Lanni²⁷, K. Lantzsch²³, A. Lanza^{123a}, A. Lapertosa^{53a,53b}, S. Laplace⁸³, J.F. Laporte¹³⁸, T. Lari^{94a}, F. Lasagni Manghi^{22a,22b}, M. Lassnig³², T.S. Lau^{62a}, P. Laurelli⁵⁰, W. Lavrijsen¹⁶, A.T. Law¹³⁹, P. Laycock⁷⁷, T. Lazovich⁵⁹, M. Lazzaroni^{94a,94b}, B. Le⁹¹, O. Le Dortz⁸³, E. Le Guirriec⁸⁸, E.P. Le Quilleuc¹³⁸, M. LeBlanc¹⁷², T. LeCompte⁶, F. Ledroit-Guillon⁵⁸, C.A. Lee²⁷, G.R. Lee^{34a}, S.C. Lee¹⁵³, L. Lee⁵⁹, B. Lefebvre⁹⁰, G. Lefebvre⁸³, M. Lefebvre¹⁷², F. Legger¹⁰², C. Leggett¹⁶, G. Lehmann Miotto³², X. Lei⁷, W.A. Leight⁴⁵, M.A.L. Leite^{26d}, R. Leitner¹³¹, D. Lellouch¹⁷⁵, B. Lemmer⁵⁷, K.J.C. Leney⁸¹, T. Lenz²³, B. Lenzi³², R. Leone⁷, S. Leone^{126a,126b}, C. Leonidopoulos⁴⁹, G. Lerner¹⁵¹, C. Leroy⁹⁷, R. Les¹⁶¹, A.A.J. Lesage¹³⁸, C.G. Lester³⁰, M. Levchenko¹²⁵, J. Levêque⁵, D. Levin⁹², L.J. Levinson¹⁷⁵, M. Levy¹⁹, D. Lewis⁷⁹, B. Li^{36a,w}, Changqiao Li^{36a}, H. Li¹⁵⁰, L. Li^{36c}, Q. Li^{35a,35d}, Q. Li^{36a}, S. Li⁴⁸, X. Li^{36c}, Y. Li¹⁴³, Z. Liang^{35a}, B. Liberti^{135a}, A. Liblong¹⁶¹, K. Lie^{62c}, J. Liebal²³, W. Liebig¹⁵, A. Limosani¹⁵², C.Y. Lin³⁰, K. Lin⁹³, S.C. Lin¹⁸², T.H. Lin⁸⁶, R.A. Linck⁶⁴, B.E. Lindquist¹⁵⁰, A.E. Lioni⁵², E. Lipeles¹²⁴, A. Lipniacka¹⁵, M. Lisovyi^{60b}, T.M. Liss^{169,ag}, A. Lister¹⁷¹, A.M. Litke¹³⁹, B. Liu⁶⁷, H. Liu⁹², H. Liu²⁷, J.K.K. Liu¹²², J. Liu^{36b}, J.B. Liu^{36a}, K. Liu⁸⁸, L. Liu¹⁶⁹, M. Liu^{36a}, Y.L. Liu^{36a}, Y. Liu^{36a}, M. Livan^{123a,123b}, A. Lleres⁵⁸, J. Llorente Merino^{35a}, S.L. Lloyd⁷⁹, C.Y. Lo^{62b}, F. Lo Sterzo⁴³, E.M. Lobodzinska⁴⁵, P. Loch⁷, F.K. Loebinger⁸⁷, A. Loesle⁵¹, K.M. Loew²⁵, T. Lohse¹⁷, K. Lohwasser¹⁴¹, M. Lokajicek¹²⁹, B.A. Long²⁴, J.D. Long¹⁶⁹, R.E. Long⁷⁵, L. Longo^{76a,76b}, K.A. Looper¹¹³, J.A. Lopez^{34b}, I. Lopez Paz¹³, A. Lopez Solis⁸³, J. Lorenz¹⁰², N. Lorenzo Martinez⁵, M. Losada²¹, P.J. Lösel¹⁰², X. Lou^{35a}, A. Lounis¹¹⁹, J. Love⁶, P.A. Love⁷⁵, H. Lu^{62a}, N. Lu⁹², Y.J. Lu⁶³, H.J. Lubatti¹⁴⁰, C. Luci^{134a,134b}, A. Lucotte⁵⁸, C. Luedtke⁵¹, F. Luehring⁶⁴, W. Lukas⁶⁵, L. Luminari^{134a}, O. Lundberg^{148a,148b}, B. Lund-Jensen¹⁴⁹, M.S. Lutz⁸⁹, P.M. Luzi⁸³, D. Lynn²⁷, R. Lysak¹²⁹, E. Lytken⁸⁴, F. Lyu^{35a}, V. Lyubushkin⁶⁸, H. Ma²⁷, L.L. Ma^{36b}, Y. Ma^{36b}, G. Maccarrone⁵⁰, A. Macchiolo¹⁰³, C.M. Macdonald¹⁴¹, B. Maček⁷⁸, J. Machado Miguens^{124,128b}, D. Madaffari¹⁷⁰, R. Madar³⁷, W.F. Mader⁴⁷, A. Madsen⁴⁵, N. Madysa⁴⁷, J. Maeda⁷⁰, S. Maeland¹⁵, T. Maeno²⁷, A.S. Maevskiy¹⁰¹, V. Magerl⁵¹, C. Maiani¹¹⁹, C. Maidantchik^{26a}, T. Maier¹⁰², A. Maio^{128a,128b,128d}, O. Majersky^{146a}, S. Majewski¹¹⁸, Y. Makida⁶⁹, N. Makovec¹¹⁹, B. Malaescu⁸³, Pa. Malecki⁴², V.P. Maleev¹²⁵, F. Malek⁵⁸, U. Mallik⁶⁶, D. Malon⁶, C. Malone³⁰, S. Maltezos¹⁰, S. Malyukov³², J. Mamuzic¹⁷⁰, G. Mancini⁵⁰, I. Mandić⁷⁸, J. Maneira^{128a,128b}, L. Manhaes de Andrade Filho^{26b}, J. Manjarres Ramos⁴⁷, K.H. Mankinen⁸⁴, A. Mann¹⁰², A. Manousos³², B. Mansoulie¹³⁸, J.D. Mansour^{35a}, R. Mantifel⁹⁰, M. Mantoani⁵⁷, S. Manzoni^{94a,94b}, L. Mapelli³², G. Marceca²⁹, L. March⁵², L. Marchese¹²², G. Marchiori⁸³, M. Marcisovsky¹²⁹, C.A. Marin Tobon³², M. Marjanovic³⁷, D.E. Marley⁹², F. Marroquim^{26a}, S.P. Marsden⁸⁷, Z. Marshall¹⁶, M.U.F. Martensson¹⁶⁸, S. Marti-Garcia¹⁷⁰, C.B. Martin¹¹³, T.A. Martin¹⁷³, V.J. Martin⁴⁹, B. Martin dit Latour¹⁵, M. Martinez^{13,v}, V.I. Martinez Outschoorn¹⁶⁹, S. Martin-Haugh¹³³, V.S. Martoiu^{28b}, A.C. Martyniuk⁸¹, A. Marzin³², L. Masetti⁸⁶, T. Mashimo¹⁵⁷, R. Mashinistov⁹⁸, J. Masik⁸⁷, A.L. Maslennikov^{111,c}, L.H. Mason⁹¹, L. Massa^{135a,135b}, P. Mastrandrea⁵, A. Mastroberardino^{40a,40b}, T. Masubuchi¹⁵⁷, P. Mättig¹⁷⁸, J. Maurer^{28b}, S.J. Maxfield⁷⁷, D.A. Maximov^{111,c}, R. Mazini¹⁵³, I. Maznas¹⁵⁶, S.M. Mazza^{94a,94b}, N.C. Mc Fadden¹⁰⁷, G. Mc Goldrick¹⁶¹, S.P. Mc Kee⁹², A. McCarn⁹², R.L. McCarthy¹⁵⁰, T.G. McCarthy¹⁰³, L.I. McClymont⁸¹, E.F. McDonald⁹¹, J.A. Mcfayden³², G. Mchedlidze⁵⁷, S.J. McMahon¹³³, P.C. McNamara⁹¹, C.J. McNicol¹⁷³, R.A. McPherson^{172,o}, S. Meehan¹⁴⁰, T.J. Megy⁵¹, S. Mehlhase¹⁰², A. Mehta⁷⁷, T. Meideck⁵⁸, K. Meier^{60a}, B. Meirose⁴⁴, D. Melini^{170,ah}, B.R. Mellado Garcia^{147c}, J.D. Mellenthin⁵⁷, M. Melo^{146a}, F. Meloni¹⁸, A. Melzer²³, S.B. Menary⁸⁷, L. Meng⁷⁷, X.T. Meng⁹², A. Mengarelli^{22a,22b}, S. Menke¹⁰³, E. Meoni^{40a,40b}, S. Mergelmeyer¹⁷, C. Merlassino¹⁸, P. Mermod⁵², L. Merola^{106a,106b}, C. Meroni^{94a}, F.S. Merritt³³, A. Messina^{134a,134b}, J. Metcalfe⁶, A.S. Mete¹⁶⁶, C. Meyer¹²⁴, J-P. Meyer¹³⁸, J. Meyer¹⁰⁹, H. Meyer Zu Theenhausen^{60a},

F. Miano¹⁵¹, R.P. Middleton¹³³, S. Miglioranza^{53a,53b}, L. Mijović⁴⁹, G. Mikenberg¹⁷⁵,
M. Mikestikova¹²⁹, M. Mikuz⁷⁸, M. Milesi⁹¹, A. Milic¹⁶¹, D.A. Millar⁷⁹, D.W. Miller³³, C. Mills⁴⁹,
A. Milov¹⁷⁵, D.A. Milstead^{148a,148b}, A.A. Minaenko¹³², Y. Minami¹⁵⁷, I.A. Minashvili^{54b},
A.I. Mincer¹¹², B. Mindur^{41a}, M. Mineev⁶⁸, Y. Minegishi¹⁵⁷, Y. Ming¹⁷⁶, L.M. Mir¹³, A. Mirto^{76a,76b},
K.P. Mistry¹²⁴, T. Mitani¹⁷⁴, J. Mitrevski¹⁰², V.A. Mitsou¹⁷⁰, A. Miucci¹⁸, P.S. Miyagawa¹⁴¹,
A. Mizukami⁶⁹, J.U. Mjörnmark⁸⁴, T. Mkrtchyan¹⁸⁰, M. Mlynarikova¹³¹, T. Moa^{148a,148b},
K. Mochizuki⁹⁷, P. Mogg⁵¹, S. Mohapatra³⁸, S. Molander^{148a,148b}, R. Moles-Valls²³, M.C. Mondragon⁹³,
K. Mönig⁴⁵, J. Monk³⁹, E. Monnier⁸⁸, A. Montalbano¹⁵⁰, J. Montejo Berlingen³², F. Monticelli⁷⁴,
S. Monzani^{94a,94b}, R.W. Moore³, N. Morange¹¹⁹, D. Moreno²¹, M. Moreno Llácer³², P. Morettini^{53a},
S. Morgenstern³², D. Mori¹⁴⁴, T. Mori¹⁵⁷, M. Morii⁵⁹, M. Morinaga¹⁷⁴, V. Morisbak¹²¹, A.K. Morley³²,
G. Mornacchi³², J.D. Morris⁷⁹, L. Morvaj¹⁵⁰, P. Moschovakos¹⁰, M. Mosidze^{54b}, H.J. Moss¹⁴¹,
J. Moss^{145,ai}, K. Motohashi¹⁵⁹, R. Mount¹⁴⁵, E. Mountricha²⁷, E.J.W. Moyse⁸⁹, S. Muanza⁸⁸,
F. Mueller¹⁰³, J. Mueller¹²⁷, R.S.P. Mueller¹⁰², D. Muenstermann⁷⁵, P. Mullen⁵⁶, G.A. Mullier¹⁸,
F.J. Munoz Sanchez⁸⁷, W.J. Murray^{173,133}, H. Musheghyan³², M. Muškinja⁷⁸, A.G. Myagkov^{132,aj},
M. Myska¹³⁰, B.P. Nachman¹⁶, O. Nackenhorst⁵², K. Nagai¹²², R. Nagai^{69,ae}, K. Nagano⁶⁹,
Y. Nagasaka⁶¹, K. Nagata¹⁶⁴, M. Nagel⁵¹, E. Nagy⁸⁸, A.M. Nairz³², Y. Nakahama¹⁰⁵, K. Nakamura⁶⁹,
T. Nakamura¹⁵⁷, I. Nakano¹¹⁴, R.F. Naranjo Garcia⁴⁵, R. Narayan¹¹, D.I. Narrias Villar^{60a},
I. Naryshkin¹²⁵, T. Naumann⁴⁵, G. Navarro²¹, R. Nayyar⁷, H.A. Neal⁹², P.Yu. Nechaeva⁹⁸, T.J. Neep¹³⁸,
A. Negrì^{123a,123b}, M. Negrini^{22a}, S. Nektarijevic¹⁰⁸, C. Nellist⁵⁷, A. Nelson¹⁶⁶, M.E. Nelson¹²²,
S. Nemecek¹²⁹, P. Nemethy¹¹², M. Nessi^{32,ak}, M.S. Neubauer¹⁶⁹, M. Neumann¹⁷⁸, P.R. Newman¹⁹,
T.Y. Ng^{62c}, Y.S. Ng¹⁷, T. Nguyen Manh⁹⁷, R.B. Nickerson¹²², R. Nicolaidou¹³⁸, J. Nielsen¹³⁹,
N. Nikiforou¹¹, V. Nikolaenko^{132,aj}, I. Nikolic-Audit⁸³, K. Nikolopoulos¹⁹, P. Nilsson²⁷, Y. Ninomiya⁶⁹,
A. Nisati^{134a}, N. Nishu^{36c}, R. Nisius¹⁰³, I. Nitsche⁴⁶, T. Nitta¹⁷⁴, T. Nobe¹⁵⁷, Y. Noguchi⁷¹,
M. Nomachi¹²⁰, I. Nomidis³¹, M.A. Nomura²⁷, T. Nooney⁷⁹, M. Nordberg³², N. Norjoharuddeen¹²²,
O. Novgorodova⁴⁷, M. Nozaki⁶⁹, L. Nozka¹¹⁷, K. Ntekas¹⁶⁶, E. Nurse⁸¹, F. Nuti⁹¹, K. O'Connor²⁵,
D.C. O'Neil¹⁴⁴, A.A. O'Rourke⁴⁵, V. O'Shea⁵⁶, F.G. Oakham^{31,d}, H. Oberlack¹⁰³, T. Obermann²³,
J. Ocariz⁸³, A. Ochi⁷⁰, I. Ochoa³⁸, J.P. Ochoa-Ricoux^{34a}, S. Oda⁷³, S. Odaka⁶⁹, A. Oh⁸⁷, S.H. Oh⁴⁸,
C.C. Ohm¹⁴⁹, H. Ohman¹⁶⁸, H. Oide^{53a,53b}, H. Okawa¹⁶⁴, Y. Okumura¹⁵⁷, T. Okuyama⁶⁹, A. Olariu^{28b},
L.F. Oleiro Seabra^{128a}, S.A. Olivares Pino^{34a}, D. Oliveira Damazio²⁷, M.J.R. Olsson³³, A. Olszewski⁴²,
J. Olszowska⁴², A. Onofre^{128a,128e}, K. Onogi¹⁰⁵, P.U.E. Onyisi^{11,aa}, H. Oppen¹²¹, M.J. Oreglia³³,
Y. Oren¹⁵⁵, D. Orestano^{136a,136b}, N. Orlando^{62b}, R.S. Orr¹⁶¹, B. Osculati^{53a,53b,*}, R. Ospanov^{36a},
G. Otero y Garzon²⁹, H. Otono⁷³, M. Ouchrif^{137d}, F. Ould-Saada¹²¹, A. Ouraou¹³⁸, K.P. Oussoren¹⁰⁹,
Q. Ouyang^{35a}, M. Owen⁵⁶, R.E. Owen¹⁹, V.E. Ozcan^{20a}, N. Ozturk⁸, K. Pachal¹⁴⁴, A. Pacheco Pages¹³,
L. Pacheco Rodriguez¹³⁸, C. Padilla Aranda¹³, S. Pagan Griso¹⁶, M. Paganini¹⁷⁹, F. Paige²⁷,
G. Palacino⁶⁴, S. Palazzo^{40a,40b}, S. Palestini³², M. Palka^{41b}, D. Pallin³⁷, E.St. Panagiotopoulou¹⁰,
I. Panagoulas¹⁰, C.E. Pandini⁵², J.G. Panduro Vazquez⁸⁰, P. Pani³², S. Panitkin²⁷, D. Pantea^{28b},
L. Paolozzi⁵², Th.D. Papadopoulou¹⁰, K. Papageorgiou^{9,s}, A. Paramonov⁶, D. Paredes Hernandez¹⁷⁹,
A.J. Parker⁷⁵, M.A. Parker³⁰, K.A. Parker⁴⁵, F. Parodi^{53a,53b}, J.A. Parsons³⁸, U. Parzefall⁵¹,
V.R. Pascuzzi¹⁶¹, J.M. Pasner¹³⁹, E. Pasqualucci^{134a}, S. Passaggio^{53a}, Fr. Pastore⁸⁰, S. Patariaia⁸⁶,
J.R. Pater⁸⁷, T. Pauly³², B. Pearson¹⁰³, S. Pedraza Lopez¹⁷⁰, R. Pedro^{128a,128b}, S.V. Peleganchuk^{111,c},
O. Penc¹²⁹, C. Peng^{35a,35d}, H. Peng^{36a}, J. Penwell⁶⁴, B.S. Peralva^{26b}, M.M. Perego¹³⁸, D.V. Perepelitsa²⁷,
F. Peri¹⁷, L. Perini^{94a,94b}, H. Pernegger³², S. Perrella^{106a,106b}, R. Peschke⁴⁵, V.D. Peshekhonov^{68,*},
K. Peters⁴⁵, R.F.Y. Peters⁸⁷, B.A. Petersen³², T.C. Petersen³⁹, E. Petit⁵⁸, A. Petridis¹, C. Petridou¹⁵⁶,
P. Petroff¹¹⁹, E. Petrolo^{134a}, M. Petrov¹²², F. Petrucci^{136a,136b}, N.E. Pettersson⁸⁹, A. Peyaud¹³⁸,
R. Pezoa^{34b}, F.H. Phillips⁹³, P.W. Phillips¹³³, G. Piacquadio¹⁵⁰, E. Pianori¹⁷³, A. Picazio⁸⁹,
M.A. Pickering¹²², R. Piegaia²⁹, J.E. Pilcher³³, A.D. Pilkington⁸⁷, M. Pinamonti^{135a,135b}, J.L. Pinfold³,
H. Pirumov⁴⁵, M. Pitt¹⁷⁵, L. Plazak^{146a}, M.-A. Pleier²⁷, V. Pleskot⁸⁶, E. Plotnikova⁶⁸, D. Pluth⁶⁷,

P. Podberezko¹¹¹, R. Poettgen⁸⁴, R. Poggi^{123a,123b}, L. Poggioli¹¹⁹, I. Pogrebnyak⁹³, D. Pohl²³,
 I. Pokharel⁵⁷, G. Polesello^{123a}, A. Poley⁴⁵, A. Policicchio^{40a,40b}, R. Polifka³², A. Polini^{22a},
 C.S. Pollard⁵⁶, V. Polychronakos²⁷, K. Pommès³², D. Ponomarenko¹⁰⁰, L. Pontecorvo^{134a},
 G.A. Popeneciu^{28d}, D.M. Portillo Quintero⁸³, S. Pospisil¹³⁰, K. Potamianos⁴⁵, I.N. Potrap⁶⁸,
 C.J. Potter³⁰, H. Potti¹¹, T. Poulsen⁸⁴, J. Poveda³², M.E. Pozo Astigarraga³², P. Pralavorio⁸⁸,
 A. Pranko¹⁶, S. Prell⁶⁷, D. Price⁸⁷, M. Primavera^{76a}, S. Prince⁹⁰, N. Proklova¹⁰⁰, K. Prokofiev^{62c},
 F. Prokoshin^{34b}, S. Protopopescu²⁷, J. Proudfoot⁶, M. Przybycien^{41a}, A. Puri¹⁶⁹, P. Puzo¹¹⁹, J. Qian⁹²,
 G. Qin⁵⁶, Y. Qin⁸⁷, A. Quadt⁵⁷, M. Queitsch-Maitland⁴⁵, D. Quilty⁵⁶, S. Raddum¹²¹, V. Radeka²⁷,
 V. Radescu¹²², S.K. Radhakrishnan¹⁵⁰, P. Radloff¹¹⁸, P. Rados⁹¹, F. Ragusa^{94a,94b}, G. Rahal¹⁸¹,
 J.A. Raine⁸⁷, S. Rajagopalan²⁷, C. Rangel-Smith¹⁶⁸, T. Rashid¹¹⁹, S. Raspopov⁵, M.G. Ratti^{94a,94b},
 D.M. Rauch⁴⁵, F. Rauscher¹⁰², S. Rave⁸⁶, I. Ravinovich¹⁷⁵, J.H. Rawling⁸⁷, M. Raymond³²,
 A.L. Read¹²¹, N.P. Readioff⁵⁸, M. Reale^{76a,76b}, D.M. Rebuzzi^{123a,123b}, A. Redelbach¹⁷⁷, G. Redlinger²⁷,
 R. Reece¹³⁹, R.G. Reed^{147c}, K. Reeves⁴⁴, L. Rehnisch¹⁷, J. Reichert¹²⁴, A. Reiss⁸⁶, C. Rembser³²,
 H. Ren^{35a,35d}, M. Rescigno^{134a}, S. Resconi^{94a}, E.D. Resseguie¹²⁴, S. Rettie¹⁷¹, E. Reynolds¹⁹,
 O.L. Rezanova^{111,c}, P. Reznicek¹³¹, R. Rezvani⁹⁷, R. Richter¹⁰³, S. Richter⁸¹, E. Richter-Was^{41b},
 O. Ricken²³, M. Ridel⁸³, P. Rieck¹⁰³, C.J. Riegel¹⁷⁸, J. Rieger⁵⁷, O. Rifki¹¹⁵, M. Rijssenbeek¹⁵⁰,
 A. Rimoldi^{123a,123b}, M. Rimoldi¹⁸, L. Rinaldi^{22a}, G. Ripellino¹⁴⁹, B. Ristic³², E. Ritsch³², I. Riu¹³,
 F. Rizatdinova¹¹⁶, E. Rizvi⁷⁹, C. Rizzi¹³, R.T. Roberts⁸⁷, S.H. Robertson^{90,o},
 A. Robichaud-Veronneau⁹⁰, D. Robinson³⁰, J.E.M. Robinson⁴⁵, A. Robson⁵⁶, E. Rocco⁸⁶,
 C. Roda^{126a,126b}, Y. Rodina^{88,al}, S. Rodriguez Bosca¹⁷⁰, A. Rodriguez Perez¹³,
 D. Rodriguez Rodriguez¹⁷⁰, S. Roe³², C.S. Rogan⁵⁹, O. Røhne¹²¹, J. Roloff⁵⁹, A. Romanouk¹⁰⁰,
 M. Romano^{22a,22b}, S.M. Romano Saez³⁷, E. Romero Adam¹⁷⁰, N. Rompotis⁷⁷, M. Ronzani⁵¹, L. Roos⁸³,
 S. Rosati^{134a}, K. Rosbach⁵¹, P. Rose¹³⁹, N.-A. Rosien⁵⁷, E. Rossi^{106a,106b}, L.P. Rossi^{53a}, J.H.N. Rosten³⁰,
 R. Rosten¹⁴⁰, M. Rotaru^{28b}, J. Rothberg¹⁴⁰, D. Rousseau¹¹⁹, A. Rozanov⁸⁸, Y. Rozen¹⁵⁴, X. Ruan^{147c},
 F. Rubbo¹⁴⁵, E.M. Ruettinger⁴⁵, F. Rühr⁵¹, A. Ruiz-Martinez³¹, Z. Rurikova⁵¹, N.A. Rusakovich⁶⁸,
 H.L. Russell⁹⁰, J.P. Rutherford⁷, N. Ruthmann³², Y.F. Ryabov¹²⁵, M. Rybar¹⁶⁹, G. Rybkin¹¹⁹, S. Ryu⁶,
 A. Ryzhov¹³², G.F. Rzehorz⁵⁷, A.F. Saavedra¹⁵², G. Sabato¹⁰⁹, S. Sacerdoti²⁹, H.F.-W. Sadrozinski¹³⁹,
 R. Sadykov⁶⁸, F. Safai Tehrani^{134a}, P. Saha¹¹⁰, M. Sahinsoy^{60a}, M. Saimpert⁴⁵, M. Saito¹⁵⁷, T. Saito¹⁵⁷,
 H. Sakamoto¹⁵⁷, Y. Sakurai¹⁷⁴, G. Salamanna^{136a,136b}, J.E. Salazar Loyola^{34b}, D. Salek¹⁰⁹,
 P.H. Sales De Bruin¹⁶⁸, D. Salihagic¹⁰³, A. Salnikov¹⁴⁵, J. Salt¹⁷⁰, D. Salvatore^{40a,40b}, F. Salvatore¹⁵¹,
 A. Salvucci^{62a,62b,62c}, A. Salzburger³², D. Sammel⁵¹, D. Sampsonidis¹⁵⁶, D. Sampsonidou¹⁵⁶,
 J. Sánchez¹⁷⁰, V. Sanchez Martinez¹⁷⁰, A. Sanchez Pineda^{167a,167c}, H. Sandaker¹²¹, R.L. Sandbach⁷⁹,
 C.O. Sander⁴⁵, M. Sandhoff¹⁷⁸, C. Sandoval²¹, D.P.C. Sankey¹³³, M. Sannino^{53a,53b}, Y. Sano¹⁰⁵,
 A. Sansoni⁵⁰, C. Santoni³⁷, H. Santos^{128a}, I. Santoyo Castillo¹⁵¹, A. Sapronov⁶⁸, J.G. Saraiva^{128a,128d},
 B. Sarrazin²³, O. Sasaki⁶⁹, K. Sato¹⁶⁴, E. Sauvan⁵, G. Savage⁸⁰, P. Savard^{161,d}, N. Savic¹⁰³,
 C. Sawyer¹³³, L. Sawyer^{82,u}, J. Saxon³³, C. Sbarra^{22a}, A. Sbrizzi^{22a,22b}, T. Scanlon⁸¹,
 D.A. Scannicchio¹⁶⁶, J. Schaarschmidt¹⁴⁰, P. Schacht¹⁰³, B.M. Schachtner¹⁰², D. Schaefer³³,
 L. Schaefer¹²⁴, R. Schaefer⁴⁵, J. Schaeffer⁸⁶, S. Schaepe³², S. Schaetzel^{60b}, U. Schäfer⁸⁶,
 A.C. Schaffer¹¹⁹, D. Schaile¹⁰², R.D. Schamberger¹⁵⁰, V.A. Schegelsky¹²⁵, D. Scheirich¹³¹,
 M. Schernau¹⁶⁶, C. Schiavi^{53a,53b}, S. Schier¹³⁹, L.K. Schildgen²³, C. Schillo⁵¹, M. Schioppa^{40a,40b},
 S. Schlenker³², K.R. Schmidt-Sommerfeld¹⁰³, K. Schmieden³², C. Schmitt⁸⁶, S. Schmitt⁴⁵, S. Schmitz⁸⁶,
 U. Schnoor⁵¹, L. Schoeffel¹³⁸, A. Schoening^{60b}, B.D. Schoenrock⁹³, E. Schopf²³, M. Schott⁸⁶,
 J.F.P. Schouwenger¹⁰⁸, J. Schovancova³², S. Schramm⁵², N. Schuh⁸⁶, A. Schulte⁸⁶, M.J. Schultens²³,
 H.-C. Schultz-Coulon^{60a}, H. Schulz¹⁷, M. Schumacher⁵¹, B.A. Schumm¹³⁹, Ph. Schune¹³⁸,
 A. Schwartzman¹⁴⁵, T.A. Schwarz⁹², H. Schweiger⁸⁷, Ph. Schwemling¹³⁸, R. Schwienhorst⁹³,
 J. Schwindling¹³⁸, A. Sciandra²³, G. Sciolla²⁵, M. Scornajenghi^{40a,40b}, F. Scuri^{126a,126b}, F. Scutti⁹¹,
 J. Searcy⁹², P. Seema²³, S.C. Seidel¹⁰⁷, A. Seiden¹³⁹, J.M. Seixas^{26a}, G. Sekhniaidze^{106a}, K. Sekhon⁹²,

S.J. Sekula⁴³, N. Semprini-Cesari^{22a,22b}, S. Senkin³⁷, C. Serfon¹²¹, L. Serin¹¹⁹, L. Serkin^{167a,167b},
 M. Sessa^{136a,136b}, R. Seuster¹⁷², H. Severini¹¹⁵, T. Sfiligoj⁷⁸, F. Sforza¹⁶⁵, A. Sfyrila⁵², E. Shabalina⁵⁷,
 N.W. Shaikh^{148a,148b}, L.Y. Shan^{35a}, R. Shang¹⁶⁹, J.T. Shank²⁴, M. Shapiro¹⁶, P.B. Shatalov⁹⁹,
 K. Shaw^{167a,167b}, S.M. Shaw⁸⁷, A. Shcherbakova^{148a,148b}, C.Y. Shehu¹⁵¹, Y. Shen¹¹⁵, N. Sherafati³¹,
 A.D. Sherman²⁴, P. Sherwood⁸¹, L. Shi^{153,am}, S. Shimizu⁷⁰, C.O. Shimmin¹⁷⁹, M. Shimojima¹⁰⁴,
 I.P.J. Shipsey¹²², S. Shirabe⁷³, M. Shiyakova^{68,an}, J. Shlomi¹⁷⁵, A. Shmeleva⁹⁸, D. Shoaleh Saadi⁹⁷,
 M.J. Shochet³³, S. Shojai^{94a,94b}, D.R. Shope¹¹⁵, S. Shrestha¹¹³, E. Shulga¹⁰⁰, M.A. Shupe⁷, P. Sicho¹²⁹,
 A.M. Sickles¹⁶⁹, P.E. Sidebo¹⁴⁹, E. Sideras Haddad^{147c}, O. Sidiropoulou¹⁷⁷, A. Sidoti^{22a,22b}, F. Siegert⁴⁷,
 Dj. Sijacki¹⁴, J. Silva^{128a,128d}, S.B. Silverstein^{148a}, V. Simak¹³⁰, L. Simic⁶⁸, S. Simion¹¹⁹, E. Simioni⁸⁶,
 B. Simmons⁸¹, M. Simon⁸⁶, P. Sinervo¹⁶¹, N.B. Sinev¹¹⁸, M. Sioli^{22a,22b}, G. Siragusa¹⁷⁷, I. Siral⁹²,
 S.Yu. Sivoklov¹⁰¹, J. Sjölin^{148a,148b}, M.B. Skinner⁷⁵, P. Skubic¹¹⁵, M. Slater¹⁹, T. Slavicek¹³⁰,
 M. Slawinska⁴², K. Sliwa¹⁶⁵, R. Slovak¹³¹, V. Smakhtin¹⁷⁵, B.H. Smart⁵, J. Smiesko^{146a}, N. Smirnov¹⁰⁰,
 S.Yu. Smirnov¹⁰⁰, Y. Smirnov¹⁰⁰, L.N. Smirnova^{101,ao}, O. Smirnova⁸⁴, J.W. Smith⁵⁷, M.N.K. Smith³⁸,
 R.W. Smith³⁸, M. Smizanska⁷⁵, K. Smolek¹³⁰, A.A. Snesarev⁹⁸, I.M. Snyder¹¹⁸, S. Snyder²⁷,
 R. Sobie^{172,o}, F. Socher⁴⁷, A. Soffer¹⁵⁵, A. Søggaard⁴⁹, D.A. Soh¹⁵³, G. Sokhrannyi⁷⁸,
 C.A. Solans Sanchez³², M. Solar¹³⁰, E. Yu. Soldatov¹⁰⁰, U. Soldevila¹⁷⁰, A.A. Solodkov¹³²,
 A. Soloshenko⁶⁸, O.V. Solovyanov¹³², V. Solovyev¹²⁵, P. Sommer¹⁴¹, H. Son¹⁶⁵, A. Sopczak¹³⁰,
 D. Sosa^{60b}, C.L. Sotiropoulou^{126a,126b}, S. Sottocornola^{123a,123b}, R. Soualah^{167a,167c}, A.M. Soukharev^{111,c},
 D. South⁴⁵, B.C. Sowden⁸⁰, S. Spagnolo^{76a,76b}, M. Spalla^{126a,126b}, M. Spangenberg¹⁷³, F. Spanò⁸⁰,
 D. Sperlich¹⁷, F. Spettel¹⁰³, T.M. Spieker^{60a}, R. Spighi^{22a}, G. Spigo³², L.A. Spiller⁹¹, M. Spousta¹³¹,
 R.D. St. Denis^{56,*}, A. Stabile^{94a}, R. Stamen^{60a}, S. Stamm¹⁷, E. Stanecka⁴², R.W. Stanek⁶,
 C. Stanescu^{136a}, M.M. Stanitzki⁴⁵, B.S. Stapf¹⁰⁹, S. Stapnes¹²¹, E.A. Starchenko¹³², G.H. Stark³³,
 J. Stark⁵⁸, S.H. Stark³⁹, P. Staroba¹²⁹, P. Starovoitov^{60a}, S. Stärz³², R. Staszewski⁴², M. Stegler⁴⁵,
 P. Steinberg²⁷, B. Stelzer¹⁴⁴, H.J. Stelzer³², O. Stelzer-Chilton^{163a}, H. Stenzel⁵⁵, T.J. Stevenson⁷⁹,
 G.A. Stewart⁵⁶, M.C. Stockton¹¹⁸, M. Stoebe⁹⁰, G. Stoica^{28b}, P. Stolte⁵⁷, S. Stonjek¹⁰³, A.R. Stradling⁸,
 A. Straessner⁴⁷, M.E. Stramaglia¹⁸, J. Strandberg¹⁴⁹, S. Strandberg^{148a,148b}, M. Strauss¹¹⁵,
 P. Strizeneč^{146b}, R. Ströhmer¹⁷⁷, D.M. Strom¹¹⁸, R. Stroynowski⁴³, A. Strubig⁴⁹, S.A. Stucci²⁷,
 B. Stugu¹⁵, N.A. Styles⁴⁵, D. Su¹⁴⁵, J. Su¹²⁷, S. Suchek^{60a}, Y. Sugaya¹²⁰, M. Suk¹³⁰, V.V. Sulin⁹⁸,
 DMS Sultan^{162a,162b}, S. Sultansoy^{4c}, T. Sumida⁷¹, S. Sun⁵⁹, X. Sun³, K. Suruliz¹⁵¹, C.J.E. Suster¹⁵²,
 M.R. Sutton¹⁵¹, S. Suzuki⁶⁹, M. Svatos¹²⁹, M. Swiatlowski³³, S.P. Swift², I. Sykora^{146a}, T. Sykora¹³¹,
 D. Ta⁵¹, K. Tackmann⁴⁵, J. Taenzer¹⁵⁵, A. Taffard¹⁶⁶, R. Tafirot^{163a}, E. Tahirovic⁷⁹, N. Taiblum¹⁵⁵,
 H. Takai²⁷, R. Takashima⁷², E.H. Takasugi¹⁰³, K. Takeda⁷⁰, T. Takeshita¹⁴², Y. Takubo⁶⁹, M. Talby⁸⁸,
 A.A. Talyshev^{111,c}, J. Tanaka¹⁵⁷, M. Tanaka¹⁵⁹, R. Tanaka¹¹⁹, S. Tanaka⁶⁹, R. Tanioka⁷⁰,
 B.B. Tannenwald¹¹³, S. Tapia Araya^{34b}, S. Tapprogge⁸⁶, S. Tarem¹⁵⁴, G.F. Tartarelli^{94a}, P. Tas¹³¹,
 M. Tasevsky¹²⁹, T. Tashiro⁷¹, E. Tassi^{40a,40b}, A. Tavares Delgado^{128a,128b}, Y. Tayalati^{137e}, A.C. Taylor¹⁰⁷,
 A.J. Taylor⁴⁹, G.N. Taylor⁹¹, P.T.E. Taylor⁹¹, W. Taylor^{163b}, P. Teixeira-Dias⁸⁰, D. Temple¹⁴⁴,
 H. Ten Kate³², P.K. Teng¹⁵³, J.J. Teoh¹²⁰, F. Tepel¹⁷⁸, S. Terada⁶⁹, K. Terashi¹⁵⁷, J. Terron⁸⁵, S. Terzo¹³,
 M. Testa⁵⁰, R.J. Teuscher^{161,o}, S.J. Thais¹⁷⁹, T. Theveneaux-Pelzer⁸⁸, F. Thiele³⁹, J.P. Thomas¹⁹,
 J. Thomas-Wilsker⁸⁰, P.D. Thompson¹⁹, A.S. Thompson⁵⁶, L.A. Thomsen¹⁷⁹, E. Thomson¹²⁴, Y. Tian³⁸,
 M.J. Tibbetts¹⁶, R.E. Ticse Torres⁵⁷, V.O. Tikhomirov^{98,ap}, Yu.A. Tikhonov^{111,c}, S. Timoshenko¹⁰⁰,
 P. Tipton¹⁷⁹, S. Tisserant⁸⁸, K. Todome¹⁵⁹, S. Todorova-Nova⁵, S. Todt⁴⁷, J. Tojo⁷³, S. Tokár^{146a},
 K. Tokushuku⁶⁹, E. Tolley¹¹³, L. Tomlinson⁸⁷, M. Tomoto¹⁰⁵, L. Tompkins^{145,aq}, K. Toms¹⁰⁷, B. Tong⁵⁹,
 P. Tornambe⁵¹, E. Torrence¹¹⁸, H. Torres⁴⁷, E. Torró Pastor¹⁴⁰, J. Toth^{88,ar}, F. Touchard⁸⁸,
 D.R. Tovey¹⁴¹, C.J. Treado¹¹², T. Trefzger¹⁷⁷, F. Tresoldi¹⁵¹, A. Tricoli²⁷, I.M. Trigger^{163a},
 S. Trincas-Duvoid⁸³, M.F. Tripiana¹³, W. Trischuk¹⁶¹, B. Trocme⁵⁸, A. Trofymov⁴⁵, C. Troncon^{94a},
 M. Trotter-McDonald¹⁶, M. Trovatelli¹⁷², L. Truong^{147b}, M. Trzebinski⁴², A. Trzupek⁴²,
 K.W. Tsang^{62a}, J.C.-L. Tseng¹²², P.V. Tsiarshka⁹⁵, G. Tsipolitis¹⁰, N. Tsirintanis⁹, S. Tsiskaridze¹³,

V. Tsiskaridze⁵¹, E.G. Tskhadadze^{54a}, I.I. Tsukerman⁹⁹, V. Tsulaia¹⁶, S. Tsuno⁶⁹, D. Tsybychev¹⁵⁰, Y. Tu^{62b}, A. Tudorache^{28b}, V. Tudorache^{28b}, T.T. Tulbure^{28a}, A.N. Tuna⁵⁹, S. Turchikhin⁶⁸, D. Turgeman¹⁷⁵, I. Turk Cakir^{4b,as}, R. Turra^{94a}, P.M. Tuts³⁸, G. Uccchielli^{22a,22b}, I. Ueda⁶⁹, M. Ughetto^{148a,148b}, F. Ukegawa¹⁶⁴, G. Unal³², A. Undrus²⁷, G. Unel¹⁶⁶, F.C. Ungaro⁹¹, Y. Unno⁶⁹, K. Uno¹⁵⁷, C. Unverdorben¹⁰², J. Urban^{146b}, P. Urquijo⁹¹, P. Urrejola⁸⁶, G. Usai⁸, J. Usui⁶⁹, L. Vacavant⁸⁸, V. Vacek¹³⁰, B. Vachon⁹⁰, K.O.H. Vadla¹²¹, A. Vaidya⁸¹, C. Valderanis¹⁰², E. Valdes Santurio^{148a,148b}, M. Valente⁵², S. Valentineti^{22a,22b}, A. Valero¹⁷⁰, L. Valéry¹³, S. Valkar¹³¹, A. Vallier⁵, J.A. Valls Ferrer¹⁷⁰, W. Van Den Wollenberg¹⁰⁹, H. van der Graaf¹⁰⁹, P. van Gemmeren⁶, J. Van Nieuwkoop¹⁴⁴, I. van Vulpen¹⁰⁹, M.C. van Woerden¹⁰⁹, M. Vanadia^{135a,135b}, W. Vandelli³², A. Vaniachine¹⁶⁰, P. Vankov¹⁰⁹, G. Vardanyan¹⁸⁰, R. Vari^{134a}, E.W. Varnes⁷, C. Varni^{53a,53b}, T. Varol⁴³, D. Varouchas¹¹⁹, A. Vartapetian⁸, K.E. Varvell¹⁵², J.G. Vasquez¹⁷⁹, G.A. Vasquez^{34b}, F. Vazeille³⁷, D. Vazquez Furelos¹³, T. Vazquez Schroeder⁹⁰, J. Veatch⁵⁷, V. Veeraraghavan⁷, L.M. Veloce¹⁶¹, F. Veloso^{128a,128c}, S. Veneziano^{134a}, A. Ventura^{76a,76b}, M. Venturi¹⁷², N. Venturi³², A. Venturini²⁵, V. Vercesi^{123a}, M. Verducci^{136a,136b}, W. Verkerke¹⁰⁹, A.T. Vermeulen¹⁰⁹, J.C. Vermeulen¹⁰⁹, M.C. Vetterli^{144,d}, N. Viaux Maira^{34b}, O. Viazlo⁸⁴, I. Vichou^{169,*}, T. Vickey¹⁴¹, O.E. Vickey Boeriu¹⁴¹, G.H.A. Viehhauser¹²², S. Viel¹⁶, L. Vigani¹²², M. Villa^{22a,22b}, M. Villaplana Perez^{94a,94b}, E. Vilucchi⁵⁰, M.G. Vinciter³¹, V.B. Vinogradov⁶⁸, A. Vishwakarma⁴⁵, C. Vittori^{22a,22b}, I. Vivarelli¹⁵¹, S. Vlachos¹⁰, M. Vogel¹⁷⁸, P. Vokac¹³⁰, G. Volpi¹³, H. von der Schmitt¹⁰³, E. von Toerne²³, V. Vorobel¹³¹, K. Vorobev¹⁰⁰, M. Vos¹⁷⁰, R. Voss³², J.H. Vossebeld⁷⁷, N. Vranjes¹⁴, M. Vranjes Milosavljevic¹⁴, V. Vrba¹³⁰, M. Vreeswijk¹⁰⁹, R. Vuillermet³², I. Vukotic³³, P. Wagner²³, W. Wagner¹⁷⁸, J. Wagner-Kuhr¹⁰², H. Wahlberg⁷⁴, S. Wahrenmund⁴⁷, K. Wakamiya⁷⁰, J. Walder⁷⁵, R. Walker¹⁰², W. Walkowiak¹⁴³, V. Wallangen^{148a,148b}, C. Wang^{35b}, C. Wang^{36b,at}, F. Wang¹⁷⁶, H. Wang¹⁶, H. Wang³, J. Wang⁴⁵, J. Wang¹⁵², Q. Wang¹¹⁵, R.-J. Wang⁸³, R. Wang⁶, S.M. Wang¹⁵³, T. Wang³⁸, W. Wang^{153,au}, W. Wang^{36a,av}, Z. Wang^{36c}, C. Wanotayaroj⁴⁵, A. Warburton⁹⁰, C.P. Ward³⁰, D.R. Wardrope⁸¹, A. Washbrook⁴⁹, P.M. Watkins¹⁹, A.T. Watson¹⁹, M.F. Watson¹⁹, G. Watts¹⁴⁰, S. Watts⁸⁷, B.M. Waugh⁸¹, A.F. Webb¹¹, S. Webb⁸⁶, M.S. Weber¹⁸, S.M. Weber^{60a}, S.W. Weber¹⁷⁷, S.A. Weber³¹, J.S. Webster⁶, A.R. Weidberg¹²², B. Weinert⁶⁴, J. Weingarten⁵⁷, M. Weirich⁸⁶, C. Weiser⁵¹, H. Weits¹⁰⁹, P.S. Wells³², T. Wenaus²⁷, T. Wengler³², S. Wenig³², N. Wermes²³, M.D. Werner⁶⁷, P. Werner³², M. Wessels^{60a}, T.D. Weston¹⁸, K. Whalen¹¹⁸, N.L. Whallon¹⁴⁰, A.M. Wharton⁷⁵, A.S. White⁹², A. White⁸, M.J. White¹, R. White^{34b}, D. Whiteson¹⁶⁶, B.W. Whitmore⁷⁵, F.J. Wickens¹³³, W. Wiedenmann¹⁷⁶, M. Wielers¹³³, C. Wiglesworth³⁹, L.A.M. Wiik-Fuchs⁵¹, A. Wildauer¹⁰³, F. Wilk⁸⁷, H.G. Wilkens³², H.H. Williams¹²⁴, S. Williams¹⁰⁹, C. Willis⁹³, S. Willocq⁸⁹, J.A. Wilson¹⁹, I. Wingerter-Seez⁵, E. Winkels¹⁵¹, F. Winklmeier¹¹⁸, O.J. Winston¹⁵¹, B.T. Winter²³, M. Wittgen¹⁴⁵, M. Wobisch^{82,u}, A. Wolf⁸⁶, T.M.H. Wolf¹⁰⁹, R. Wolff⁸⁸, M.W. Wolter⁴², H. Wolters^{128a,128c}, V.W.S. Wong¹⁷¹, N.L. Woods¹³⁹, S.D. Worm¹⁹, B.K. Wosiek⁴², J. Wotschack³², K.W. Wozniak⁴², M. Wu³³, S.L. Wu¹⁷⁶, X. Wu⁵², Y. Wu⁹², T.R. Wyatt⁸⁷, B.M. Wynne⁴⁹, S. Xella³⁹, Z. Xi⁹², L. Xia^{35c}, D. Xu^{35a}, L. Xu²⁷, T. Xu¹³⁸, W. Xu⁹², B. Yabsley¹⁵², S. Yacoub^{147a}, D. Yamaguchi¹⁵⁹, Y. Yamaguchi¹⁵⁹, A. Yamamoto⁶⁹, S. Yamamoto¹⁵⁷, T. Yamanaka¹⁵⁷, F. Yamane⁷⁰, M. Yamatani¹⁵⁷, T. Yamazaki¹⁵⁷, Y. Yamazaki⁷⁰, Z. Yan²⁴, H. Yang^{36c}, H. Yang¹⁶, Y. Yang¹⁵³, Z. Yang¹⁵, W.-M. Yao¹⁶, Y.C. Yap⁴⁵, Y. Yasu⁶⁹, E. Yatsenko⁵, K.H. Yau Wong²³, J. Ye⁴³, S. Ye²⁷, I. Yeletsikh⁶⁸, E. Yigitbasi²⁴, E. Yildirim⁸⁶, K. Yorita¹⁷⁴, K. Yoshihara¹²⁴, C. Young¹⁴⁵, C.J.S. Young³², J. Yu⁸, J. Yu⁶⁷, S.P.Y. Yuen²³, I. Yusuff^{30,aw}, B. Zabinski⁴², G. Zacharis¹⁰, R. Zaidan¹³, A.M. Zaitsev^{132,aj}, N. Zakharchuk⁴⁵, J. Zalieckas¹⁵, A. Zaman¹⁵⁰, S. Zambito⁵⁹, D. Zanzi⁹¹, C. Zeitnitz¹⁷⁸, G. Zemaityte¹²², A. Zemla^{41a}, J.C. Zeng¹⁶⁹, Q. Zeng¹⁴⁵, O. Zenin¹³², T. Ženiš^{146a}, D. Zerwas¹¹⁹, D. Zhang^{36b}, D. Zhang⁹², F. Zhang¹⁷⁶, G. Zhang^{36a,av}, H. Zhang¹¹⁹, J. Zhang⁶, L. Zhang⁵¹, L. Zhang^{36a}, M. Zhang¹⁶⁹, P. Zhang^{35b}, R. Zhang²³, R. Zhang^{36a,at}, X. Zhang^{36b}, Y. Zhang^{35a,35d}, Z. Zhang¹¹⁹, X. Zhao⁴³, Y. Zhao^{36b,ax}, Z. Zhao^{36a}, A. Zhemchugov⁶⁸, B. Zhou⁹², C. Zhou¹⁷⁶, L. Zhou⁴³, M. Zhou^{35a,35d}, M. Zhou¹⁵⁰, N. Zhou^{36c}, Y. Zhou⁷,

C.G. Zhu^{36b}, H. Zhu^{35a}, J. Zhu⁹², Y. Zhu^{36a}, X. Zhuang^{35a}, K. Zhukov⁹⁸, A. Zibell¹⁷⁷, D. Zieminska⁶⁴, N.I. Zimine⁶⁸, C. Zimmermann⁸⁶, S. Zimmermann⁵¹, Z. Zinonos¹⁰³, M. Zinser⁸⁶, M. Ziolkowski¹⁴³, L. Živković¹⁴, G. Zobernig¹⁷⁶, A. Zoccoli^{22a,22b}, R. Zou³³, M. zur Nedden¹⁷, L. Zwalinski³².

¹ Department of Physics, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia

² Physics Department, SUNY Albany, Albany NY, United States of America

³ Department of Physics, University of Alberta, Edmonton AB, Canada

⁴ ^(a) Department of Physics, Ankara University, Ankara; ^(b) Istanbul Aydin University, Istanbul; ^(c)

Division of Physics, TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Ankara, Turkey

⁵ LAPP, CNRS/IN2P3 and Université Savoie Mont Blanc, Annecy-le-Vieux, France

⁶ High Energy Physics Division, Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne IL, United States of America

⁷ Department of Physics, University of Arizona, Tucson AZ, United States of America

⁸ Department of Physics, The University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington TX, United States of America

⁹ Physics Department, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece

¹⁰ Physics Department, National Technical University of Athens, Zografou, Greece

¹¹ Department of Physics, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin TX, United States of America

¹² Institute of Physics, Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, Baku, Azerbaijan

¹³ Institut de Física d'Altes Energies (IFAE), The Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology, Barcelona, Spain

¹⁴ Institute of Physics, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia

¹⁵ Department for Physics and Technology, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

¹⁶ Physics Division, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and University of California, Berkeley CA, United States of America

¹⁷ Department of Physics, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany

¹⁸ Albert Einstein Center for Fundamental Physics and Laboratory for High Energy Physics, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland

¹⁹ School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

²⁰ ^(a) Department of Physics, Bogazici University, Istanbul; ^(b) Department of Physics Engineering, Gaziantep University, Gaziantep; ^(d) Istanbul Bilgi University, Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Istanbul; ^(e) Bahcesehir University, Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey

²¹ Centro de Investigaciones, Universidad Antonio Narino, Bogota, Colombia

²² ^(a) INFN Sezione di Bologna; ^(b) Dipartimento di Fisica e Astronomia, Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy

²³ Physikalisches Institut, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany

²⁴ Department of Physics, Boston University, Boston MA, United States of America

²⁵ Department of Physics, Brandeis University, Waltham MA, United States of America

²⁶ ^(a) Universidade Federal do Rio De Janeiro COPPE/EE/IF, Rio de Janeiro; ^(b) Electrical Circuits Department, Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF), Juiz de Fora; ^(c) Federal University of Sao Joao del Rei (UFSJ), Sao Joao del Rei; ^(d) Instituto de Fisica, Universidade de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil

²⁷ Physics Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton NY, United States of America

²⁸ ^(a) Transilvania University of Brasov, Brasov; ^(b) Horia Hulubei National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest; ^(c) Department of Physics, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Iasi; ^(d) National Institute for Research and Development of Isotopic and Molecular Technologies, Physics Department, Cluj Napoca; ^(e) University Politehnica Bucharest, Bucharest; ^(f) West University in Timisoara, Timisoara, Romania

²⁹ Departamento de Física, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina

- ³⁰ Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
- ³¹ Department of Physics, Carleton University, Ottawa ON, Canada
- ³² CERN, Geneva, Switzerland
- ³³ Enrico Fermi Institute, University of Chicago, Chicago IL, United States of America
- ³⁴ ^(a) Departamento de Física, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago; ^(b) Departamento de Física, Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María, Valparaíso, Chile
- ³⁵ ^(a) Institute of High Energy Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing; ^(b) Department of Physics, Nanjing University, Jiangsu; ^(c) Physics Department, Tsinghua University, Beijing 100084; ^(d) University of Chinese Academy of Science (UCAS), Beijing, China
- ³⁶ ^(a) Department of Modern Physics and State Key Laboratory of Particle Detection and Electronics, University of Science and Technology of China, Anhui; ^(b) School of Physics, Shandong University, Shandong; ^(c) Department of Physics and Astronomy, Key Laboratory for Particle Physics, Astrophysics and Cosmology, Ministry of Education; Shanghai Key Laboratory for Particle Physics and Cosmology, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai(also at PKU-CHEP), China
- ³⁷ Université Clermont Auvergne, CNRS/IN2P3, LPC, Clermont-Ferrand, France
- ³⁸ Nevis Laboratory, Columbia University, Irvington NY, United States of America
- ³⁹ Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen, Kobenhavn, Denmark
- ⁴⁰ ^(a) INFN Gruppo Collegato di Cosenza, Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati; ^(b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università della Calabria, Rende, Italy
- ⁴¹ ^(a) AGH University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Physics and Applied Computer Science, Krakow; ^(b) Marian Smoluchowski Institute of Physics, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland
- ⁴² Institute of Nuclear Physics Polish Academy of Sciences, Krakow, Poland
- ⁴³ Physics Department, Southern Methodist University, Dallas TX, United States of America
- ⁴⁴ Physics Department, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson TX, United States of America
- ⁴⁵ DESY, Hamburg and Zeuthen, Germany
- ⁴⁶ Lehrstuhl für Experimentelle Physik IV, Technische Universität Dortmund, Dortmund, Germany
- ⁴⁷ Institut für Kern- und Teilchenphysik, Technische Universität Dresden, Dresden, Germany
- ⁴⁸ Department of Physics, Duke University, Durham NC, United States of America
- ⁴⁹ SUPA - School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
- ⁵⁰ INFN e Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy
- ⁵¹ Fakultät für Mathematik und Physik, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg, Germany
- ⁵² Departement de Physique Nucleaire et Corpusculaire, Université de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland
- ⁵³ ^(a) INFN Sezione di Genova; ^(b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Genova, Genova, Italy
- ⁵⁴ ^(a) E. Andronikashvili Institute of Physics, Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi; ^(b) High Energy Physics Institute, Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia
- ⁵⁵ II Physikalisches Institut, Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen, Giessen, Germany
- ⁵⁶ SUPA - School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom
- ⁵⁷ II Physikalisches Institut, Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen, Germany
- ⁵⁸ Laboratoire de Physique Subatomique et de Cosmologie, Université Grenoble-Alpes, CNRS/IN2P3, Grenoble, France
- ⁵⁹ Laboratory for Particle Physics and Cosmology, Harvard University, Cambridge MA, United States of America
- ⁶⁰ ^(a) Kirchhoff-Institut für Physik, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg; ^(b) Physikalisches Institut, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
- ⁶¹ Faculty of Applied Information Science, Hiroshima Institute of Technology, Hiroshima, Japan
- ⁶² ^(a) Department of Physics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong; ^(b) Department of Physics, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong; ^(c) Department of Physics and

Institute for Advanced Study, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Clear Water Bay, Kowloon, Hong Kong, China

⁶³ Department of Physics, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan, Taiwan

⁶⁴ Department of Physics, Indiana University, Bloomington IN, United States of America

⁶⁵ Institut für Astro- und Teilchenphysik, Leopold-Franzens-Universität, Innsbruck, Austria

⁶⁶ University of Iowa, Iowa City IA, United States of America

⁶⁷ Department of Physics and Astronomy, Iowa State University, Ames IA, United States of America

⁶⁸ Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, JINR Dubna, Dubna, Russia

⁶⁹ KEK, High Energy Accelerator Research Organization, Tsukuba, Japan

⁷⁰ Graduate School of Science, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan

⁷¹ Faculty of Science, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan

⁷² Kyoto University of Education, Kyoto, Japan

⁷³ Research Center for Advanced Particle Physics and Department of Physics, Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan

⁷⁴ Instituto de Física La Plata, Universidad Nacional de La Plata and CONICET, La Plata, Argentina

⁷⁵ Physics Department, Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom

⁷⁶ ^(a) INFN Sezione di Lecce; ^(b) Dipartimento di Matematica e Fisica, Università del Salento, Lecce, Italy

⁷⁷ Oliver Lodge Laboratory, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom

⁷⁸ Department of Experimental Particle Physics, Jožef Stefan Institute and Department of Physics, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

⁷⁹ School of Physics and Astronomy, Queen Mary University of London, London, United Kingdom

⁸⁰ Department of Physics, Royal Holloway University of London, Surrey, United Kingdom

⁸¹ Department of Physics and Astronomy, University College London, London, United Kingdom

⁸² Louisiana Tech University, Ruston LA, United States of America

⁸³ Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire et de Hautes Energies, UPMC and Université Paris-Diderot and CNRS/IN2P3, Paris, France

⁸⁴ Fysiska institutionen, Lunds universitet, Lund, Sweden

⁸⁵ Departamento de Física Teórica C-15, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

⁸⁶ Institut für Physik, Universität Mainz, Mainz, Germany

⁸⁷ School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom

⁸⁸ CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université and CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France

⁸⁹ Department of Physics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA, United States of America

⁹⁰ Department of Physics, McGill University, Montreal QC, Canada

⁹¹ School of Physics, University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

⁹² Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, United States of America

⁹³ Department of Physics and Astronomy, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI, United States of America

⁹⁴ ^(a) INFN Sezione di Milano; ^(b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Milano, Milano, Italy

⁹⁵ B.I. Stepanov Institute of Physics, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Minsk, Republic of Belarus

⁹⁶ Research Institute for Nuclear Problems of Byelorussian State University, Minsk, Republic of Belarus

⁹⁷ Group of Particle Physics, University of Montreal, Montreal QC, Canada

⁹⁸ P.N. Lebedev Physical Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia

⁹⁹ Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics (ITEP), Moscow, Russia

¹⁰⁰ National Research Nuclear University MEPhI, Moscow, Russia

¹⁰¹ D.V. Skobeltsyn Institute of Nuclear Physics, M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow,

Russia

- ¹⁰² Fakultät für Physik, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, München, Germany
¹⁰³ Max-Planck-Institut für Physik (Werner-Heisenberg-Institut), München, Germany
¹⁰⁴ Nagasaki Institute of Applied Science, Nagasaki, Japan
¹⁰⁵ Graduate School of Science and Kobayashi-Maskawa Institute, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan
¹⁰⁶ ^(a) INFN Sezione di Napoli; ^(b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Napoli, Napoli, Italy
¹⁰⁷ Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque NM, United States of America
¹⁰⁸ Institute for Mathematics, Astrophysics and Particle Physics, Radboud University Nijmegen/Nikhef, Nijmegen, Netherlands
¹⁰⁹ Nikhef National Institute for Subatomic Physics and University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
¹¹⁰ Department of Physics, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb IL, United States of America
¹¹¹ Budker Institute of Nuclear Physics, SB RAS, Novosibirsk, Russia
¹¹² Department of Physics, New York University, New York NY, United States of America
¹¹³ Ohio State University, Columbus OH, United States of America
¹¹⁴ Faculty of Science, Okayama University, Okayama, Japan
¹¹⁵ Homer L. Dodge Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Oklahoma, Norman OK, United States of America
¹¹⁶ Department of Physics, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater OK, United States of America
¹¹⁷ Palacký University, RCPTM, Olomouc, Czech Republic
¹¹⁸ Center for High Energy Physics, University of Oregon, Eugene OR, United States of America
¹¹⁹ LAL, Univ. Paris-Sud, CNRS/IN2P3, Université Paris-Saclay, Orsay, France
¹²⁰ Graduate School of Science, Osaka University, Osaka, Japan
¹²¹ Department of Physics, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway
¹²² Department of Physics, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom
¹²³ ^(a) INFN Sezione di Pavia; ^(b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy
¹²⁴ Department of Physics, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia PA, United States of America
¹²⁵ National Research Centre "Kurchatov Institute" B.P.Konstantinov Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute, St. Petersburg, Russia
¹²⁶ ^(a) INFN Sezione di Pisa; ^(b) Dipartimento di Fisica E. Fermi, Università di Pisa, Pisa, Italy
¹²⁷ Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh PA, United States of America
¹²⁸ ^(a) Laboratório de Instrumentação e Física Experimental de Partículas - LIP, Lisboa; ^(b) Faculdade de Ciências, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa; ^(c) Department of Physics, University of Coimbra, Coimbra; ^(d) Centro de Física Nuclear da Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa; ^(e) Departamento de Física, Universidade do Minho, Braga; ^(f) Departamento de Física Teórica y del Cosmos, Universidad de Granada, Granada; ^(g) Dep Física and CEFITEC of Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Caparica, Portugal
¹²⁹ Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Praha, Czech Republic
¹³⁰ Czech Technical University in Prague, Praha, Czech Republic
¹³¹ Charles University, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Prague, Czech Republic
¹³² State Research Center Institute for High Energy Physics (Protvino), NRC KI, Russia
¹³³ Particle Physics Department, Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom
¹³⁴ ^(a) INFN Sezione di Roma; ^(b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Sapienza Università di Roma, Roma, Italy
¹³⁵ ^(a) INFN Sezione di Roma Tor Vergata; ^(b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Roma Tor Vergata, Roma, Italy

- ¹³⁶ ^(a) INFN Sezione di Roma Tre; ^(b) Dipartimento di Matematica e Fisica, Università Roma Tre, Roma, Italy
- ¹³⁷ ^(a) Faculté des Sciences Ain Chock, Réseau Universitaire de Physique des Hautes Energies - Université Hassan II, Casablanca; ^(b) Centre National de l'Energie des Sciences Techniques Nucleaires, Rabat; ^(c) Faculté des Sciences Semlalia, Université Cadi Ayyad, LPHEA-Marrakech; ^(d) Faculté des Sciences, Université Mohamed Premier and LTPM, Oujda; ^(e) Faculté des sciences, Université Mohammed V, Rabat, Morocco
- ¹³⁸ DSM/IRFU (Institut de Recherches sur les Lois Fondamentales de l'Univers), CEA Saclay (Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique et aux Energies Alternatives), Gif-sur-Yvette, France
- ¹³⁹ Santa Cruz Institute for Particle Physics, University of California Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz CA, United States of America
- ¹⁴⁰ Department of Physics, University of Washington, Seattle WA, United States of America
- ¹⁴¹ Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom
- ¹⁴² Department of Physics, Shinshu University, Nagano, Japan
- ¹⁴³ Department Physik, Universität Siegen, Siegen, Germany
- ¹⁴⁴ Department of Physics, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby BC, Canada
- ¹⁴⁵ SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Stanford CA, United States of America
- ¹⁴⁶ ^(a) Faculty of Mathematics, Physics & Informatics, Comenius University, Bratislava; ^(b) Department of Subnuclear Physics, Institute of Experimental Physics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Kosice, Slovak Republic
- ¹⁴⁷ ^(a) Department of Physics, University of Cape Town, Cape Town; ^(b) Department of Physics, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg; ^(c) School of Physics, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
- ¹⁴⁸ ^(a) Department of Physics, Stockholm University; ^(b) The Oskar Klein Centre, Stockholm, Sweden
- ¹⁴⁹ Physics Department, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden
- ¹⁵⁰ Departments of Physics & Astronomy and Chemistry, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook NY, United States of America
- ¹⁵¹ Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom
- ¹⁵² School of Physics, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
- ¹⁵³ Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan
- ¹⁵⁴ Department of Physics, Technion: Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel
- ¹⁵⁵ Raymond and Beverly Sackler School of Physics and Astronomy, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
- ¹⁵⁶ Department of Physics, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece
- ¹⁵⁷ International Center for Elementary Particle Physics and Department of Physics, The University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
- ¹⁵⁸ Graduate School of Science and Technology, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tokyo, Japan
- ¹⁵⁹ Department of Physics, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo, Japan
- ¹⁶⁰ Tomsk State University, Tomsk, Russia
- ¹⁶¹ Department of Physics, University of Toronto, Toronto ON, Canada
- ¹⁶² ^(a) INFN-TIFPA; ^(b) University of Trento, Trento, Italy
- ¹⁶³ ^(a) TRIUMF, Vancouver BC; ^(b) Department of Physics and Astronomy, York University, Toronto ON, Canada
- ¹⁶⁴ Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, and Center for Integrated Research in Fundamental Science and Engineering, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Japan
- ¹⁶⁵ Department of Physics and Astronomy, Tufts University, Medford MA, United States of America
- ¹⁶⁶ Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of California Irvine, Irvine CA, United States of

America

¹⁶⁷ ^(a) INFN Gruppo Collegato di Udine, Sezione di Trieste, Udine; ^(b) ICTP, Trieste; ^(c) Dipartimento di Chimica, Fisica e Ambiente, Università di Udine, Udine, Italy

¹⁶⁸ Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Uppsala, Uppsala, Sweden

¹⁶⁹ Department of Physics, University of Illinois, Urbana IL, United States of America

¹⁷⁰ Instituto de Fisica Corpuscular (IFIC), Centro Mixto Universidad de Valencia - CSIC, Spain

¹⁷¹ Department of Physics, University of British Columbia, Vancouver BC, Canada

¹⁷² Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Victoria, Victoria BC, Canada

¹⁷³ Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom

¹⁷⁴ Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

¹⁷⁵ Department of Particle Physics, The Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel

¹⁷⁶ Department of Physics, University of Wisconsin, Madison WI, United States of America

¹⁷⁷ Fakultät für Physik und Astronomie, Julius-Maximilians-Universität, Würzburg, Germany

¹⁷⁸ Fakultät für Mathematik und Naturwissenschaften, Fachgruppe Physik, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Wuppertal, Germany

¹⁷⁹ Department of Physics, Yale University, New Haven CT, United States of America

¹⁸⁰ Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia

¹⁸¹ Centre de Calcul de l'Institut National de Physique Nucléaire et de Physique des Particules (IN2P3), Villeurbanne, France

¹⁸² Academia Sinica Grid Computing, Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan

^a Also at Department of Physics, King's College London, London, United Kingdom

^b Also at Institute of Physics, Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, Baku, Azerbaijan

^c Also at Novosibirsk State University, Novosibirsk, Russia

^d Also at TRIUMF, Vancouver BC, Canada

^e Also at Department of Physics & Astronomy, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY, United States of America

^f Also at Physics Department, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine

^g Also at Department of Physics, California State University, Fresno CA, United States of America

^h Also at Department of Physics, University of Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland

ⁱ Also at II Physikalisches Institut, Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen, Germany

^j Also at Departament de Fisica de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

^k Also at Departamento de Fisica e Astronomia, Faculdade de Ciencias, Universidade do Porto, Portugal

^l Also at Tomsk State University, Tomsk, and Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology State University, Dolgoprudny, Russia

^m Also at The Collaborative Innovation Center of Quantum Matter (CICQM), Beijing, China

ⁿ Also at Università di Napoli Parthenope, Napoli, Italy

^o Also at Institute of Particle Physics (IPP), Canada

^p Also at Horia Hulubei National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest, Romania

^q Also at Department of Physics, St. Petersburg State Polytechnical University, St. Petersburg, Russia

^r Also at Borough of Manhattan Community College, City University of New York, New York City, United States of America

^s Also at Department of Financial and Management Engineering, University of the Aegean, Chios, Greece

^t Also at Centre for High Performance Computing, CSIR Campus, Rosebank, Cape Town, South Africa

^u Also at Louisiana Tech University, Ruston LA, United States of America

^v Also at Institutio Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avancats, ICREA, Barcelona, Spain

^w Also at Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, United States of America

- ^x Also at Graduate School of Science, Osaka University, Osaka, Japan
- ^y Also at Fakultät für Mathematik und Physik, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg, Germany
- ^z Also at Institute for Mathematics, Astrophysics and Particle Physics, Radboud University Nijmegen/Nikhef, Nijmegen, Netherlands
- ^{aa} Also at Department of Physics, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin TX, United States of America
- ^{ab} Also at Institute of Theoretical Physics, Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia
- ^{ac} Also at CERN, Geneva, Switzerland
- ^{ad} Also at Georgian Technical University (GTU), Tbilisi, Georgia
- ^{ae} Also at Ochadai Academic Production, Ochanomizu University, Tokyo, Japan
- ^{af} Also at Manhattan College, New York NY, United States of America
- ^{ag} Also at The City College of New York, New York NY, United States of America
- ^{ah} Also at Departamento de Física Teórica y del Cosmos, Universidad de Granada, Granada, Portugal
- ^{ai} Also at Department of Physics, California State University, Sacramento CA, United States of America
- ^{aj} Also at Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology State University, Dolgoprudny, Russia
- ^{ak} Also at Departement de Physique Nucleaire et Corpusculaire, Université de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland
- ^{al} Also at Institut de Física d'Altes Energies (IFAE), The Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology, Barcelona, Spain
- ^{am} Also at School of Physics, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China
- ^{an} Also at Institute for Nuclear Research and Nuclear Energy (INRNE) of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria
- ^{ao} Also at Faculty of Physics, M.V.Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia
- ^{ap} Also at National Research Nuclear University MEPhI, Moscow, Russia
- ^{aq} Also at Department of Physics, Stanford University, Stanford CA, United States of America
- ^{ar} Also at Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Budapest, Hungary
- ^{as} Also at Giresun University, Faculty of Engineering, Turkey
- ^{at} Also at CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université and CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France
- ^{au} Also at Department of Physics, Nanjing University, Jiangsu, China
- ^{av} Also at Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan
- ^{aw} Also at University of Malaya, Department of Physics, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- ^{ax} Also at LAL, Univ. Paris-Sud, CNRS/IN2P3, Université Paris-Saclay, Orsay, France
- * Deceased